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LABOUR'S DEFENCE POLICY

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Is there any alternative?

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Cover: Punch cartoon published shortly after Crimean War

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Now is the time . . .

LABOUR SUPPORTERS have long come to accept at party conference time that the Tories extract political advantage from the spectacle and the television; while Labour usually contrives to wash its linen under the lights. Despite the disgraceful fiasco over the elections for the National Executive (for which Sid Weighell has now paid) when the dust has settled 1982 may prove to be something of an exception.

For beneath the thinnest layer of Tory manners, two things became extremely clear from the Tories in Brighton. The first is that the party is deeply divided over almost every issue of domestic economic and social policy. The fact that Mrs Thatcher's position as Prime Minister within her cabinet and with her conference has never been stronger cannot obscure the truth that the division between the Wets and the Dries inside the Tory Party is not some marginal question of style or class, but a fundamental difference of political analysis about Britain and the nature of Toryism.

The second clear piece of evidence from Brighton is that the dominant Thatcherite wing of the Tory Party, far from trimming as a General Election gets nearer, is becoming more and more ideologically determined. The Prime Minister may realise that studies of how to dismantle the NHS are an electoral liability: and may instruct her party chairman to say in public that they are a dead duck.

But the plain truth is that the plans for dismantling the NHS – and the education service and the structure of our publicly owned industries and our social services and much else besides – will remain on the secret agenda of this government, even if for tactical reasons they are left off the public agenda.

The reason is that the key group of ministers gathered around Mrs Thatcher has an ideological commitment to cut government spending, despite the overwhelming evidence that lack of demand is now inflicting irreversible damage on the British economy. Arguments to show that the government deficit in this country is now lower as a proportion of total output than in any other major industrial country have no effect on those for whom Gladstonian concepts of the balanced budget have assumed the quality of unchallengable dogma.

So we have plans for private medical insurance – not to produce better medical care, but to produce a lower government borrowing requirement. And plans for school vouchers and student loans, despite the clear inequities that these would re-introduce. And plans to sell off national assets (at cut prices to ensure quick sale), despite the obvious loss of national benefit in the future. All in the name of a totally discredited theory of social and economic behaviour.

Any Socialist opposition ought to have difficulty in believing its political luck. The time for internal power struggles within the party is over. The dominant Right, if it is really concerned with winning the next election and not just with taking political revenge, must control its urge to impose its views on the NEC, or it will place Foot in an impossible political and personal position.

Michael Foot has not been to date either an entirely effective party leader or an entirely convincing potential Prime Minister. Modern politics, for better or worse, demand polical leaders able to project a confident message by television and in public. In this role Michael Foot is a long way short of ideal. But, without wishing to be gratuitously offensive, he is the best leader of the Labour Party we have got.

The situation that would be created between now and an election, if he were to step down, would be politically catastrophic – either with Denis Healey taking over automatically as caretaker, or with a bitter contest between candidates, none of whom could unite and redirect the party in time to save us from another party in time to save use from a second – next time far worse – Thatcher administration.

Britain's other islands

AS MORE DETAILS emerge of the Prime Minister's recent trip to China and Hong Kong, it is increasingly clear that it was quite a little disaster. Almost exactly as her Far East advisers had feared it would be. Anyone who knows China could have told Mrs Thatcher before she went that the Chinese did not accept British claims to sovereignty of any part of the colony. If China wants to re-establish its legal overlordship, there is nothing that any British government can do about it.

What is more, there is nothing that any British government should even wish to do about it. The reality should be faced that Hong Kong is a wholly anachronistic relic of a by-gone colonial age. In a community which is 98 per cent Chinese, there is no legitimate British political interest in maintaining the facade of direct Anglo-Saxon rule from Whitehall. Honest negotiations in the best interests of the residents to achieve a quiet transfer of sovereignty back to China is the only sensible Hong Kong policy.

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Francis Wheen on a free press

Foreign Office read City Limits sensation

LONDON'S radical magazine *City Limits* has celebrated its first birthday in splendidly left-wing style by being raided by the police. At 5pm on Monday this week Det Chf Supt Robert Hardy of Scotland Yard's Serious Crimes Squad, accompanied by four other detectives, arrived at the paper's offices in Islington with a search warrant. He ordered the news editor of *City Limits*, Duncan Campbell, to hand back a bundle of leaked Foreign Office documents which he had used to write an article in the current issue of the paper. Campbell duly gave them back.

The police raid followed the issuing of an injunction last Friday, at the Foreign Office's request, which instructed *City Limits* to return the documents and not to write any more articles about them.

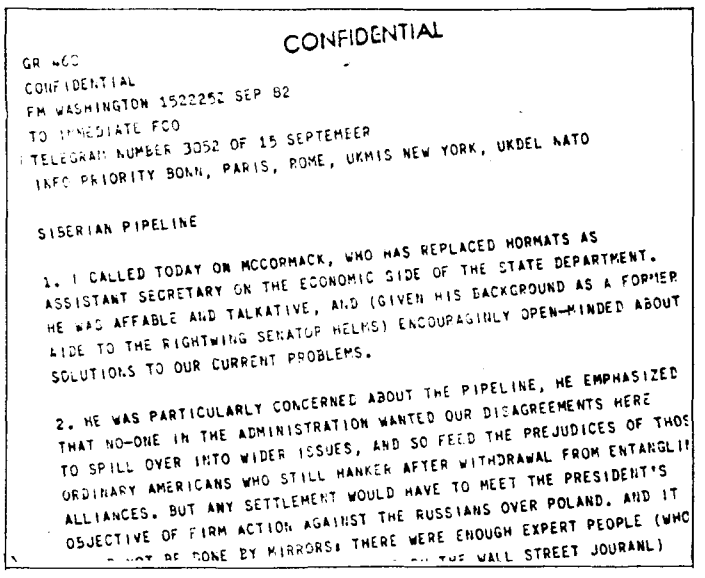
One of the most interesting aspects of the affair is the way in which Fleet Street reported – or, rather, failed to report – the story. Although the contents of the documents were not earth-shattering, they were of some interest, and the very fact that they had leaked at all might have been considered to be newsworthy. An article in the *Guardian* this week suggested that the FO's injunction against *City Limits* 'effectively prevented the rest of Fleet Street from following up the story'. This is nonsense. The injunction applied only to *City Limits*, not to 'the rest of Fleet Street'. In any case, the injunction was not issued until Friday afternoon, by which time the *Guardian* had known about the leaked documents for three days. The paper could have carried a report on Thursday or Friday, but it failed to do so.

Equally spavined was the reaction of the fearless, investigative *Sunday Times*, which had obtained a partial set of the documents. On Friday evening the Foreign Office rang the *Sunday Times* to say that there was an injunction. Even though the injunction applied only to *City Limits*, the *Sunday Times* caved in to this implicit threat. On the following day, Saturday, a man from the Foreign Office asked the *Sunday Times* to return the documents, Frank Giles, the paper's editor, handed them back.

The only paper to emerge with credit was the *Observer*, which, like the *Sunday Times*, received a threatening telephone call from the Foreign Office. Unlike the *Sunday Times*, the *Observer* went ahead with its story, reporting the contents of the documents in a prominent position on its front page.

Although there are few surprises in the documents, they do give a charmingly candid account of the way in which the Foreign Office conducts its business. Referring to the European Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels on 20 and 21 September, a briefing paper for Francis Pym says that 'it would be tactically useful to support the Germans and embarrass the French and Italians'.

There are also moments of unintended humour. A brief for the Brussels meeting deals with European Parliament resolutions. Under the heading 'UK Objective', the paper says simply: 'to ensure minimal discussion'..... □



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SIBERIAN PIPELINE

1. I CALLED TODAY ON MCCORMACK, WHO HAS REPLACED HORMATS AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HE WAS AFFABLE AND TALKATIVE, AND (GIVEN HIS BACKGROUND AS A FORMER AIDE TO THE RIGHTWING SENATOR HELMS) ENCOURAGINGLY OPEN-MINDED ABOUT SOLUTIONS TO OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS.

2. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PIPELINE, HE EMPHASIZED THAT NO-ONE IN THE ADMINISTRATION WANTED OUR DISAGREEMENTS HERE TO SPILL OVER INTO WIDER ISSUES, AND SO FEED THE PREJUDICES OF THOS ORDINARY AMERICANS WHO STILL HANKER AFTER WITHDRAWAL FROM ENTANGLI ALLIANCES. BUT ANY SETTLEMENT WOULD HAVE TO MEET THE PRESIDENT'S OBJECTIVE OF FIRM ACTION AGAINST THE RUSSIANS OVER POLAND. AND IT [illegible] BE DONE BY MIRRORS: THERE WERE ENOUGH EXPERT PEOPLE (WHO [illegible] THE WALL STREET JOURANL)

Home thoughts from abroad – the injuncted documents

Patrick Wintour on Mr Weighell's resignation

Weighelling and dealing

LEFT-WINGERS on the National Union of Railwaymen's executive believe that the unexpected resignation of their General Secretary Sid Weighell may mean that the union's special conference next week will reject the 6.5 per cent pay award offered by an independent tribunal. This would raise the prospect of all three unions in the Triple Alliance – the railwaymen, the steelmen and miners – confronting the Government at the same time. Hitherto the Triple Alliance has been a rhetorical device. Mr Weighell's authoritative control of his union's conference has, in the past, ensured that the union has willingly co-operated with the Railways Board. It is not yet clear whether Mr Weighell will serve his three month's notice.

Mr Weighell – who has never fully recovered health since a car crash some years ago – has been at odds with an increasingly left-wing executive. Though remarkably intelligent and able, he has been criticised for being authoritarian. Complaints have been made that papers have not been placed in front of the executive in time and that it has not been possible for executive members to put motions to executive meetings. A motion of no confidence in Mr Weighell was withdrawn at the last moment from this year's annual conference.

Mr Weighell's failure last week to follow his union conference mandate in the Labour Party NEC elections and vote for the miner, Eric Clarke, had become increasingly difficult to explain, since, at the NUR delegation meeting before Labour's conference, Weighell frequently forbade the delegation from voting left on policy issues – on the grounds that it would contradict union conference mandates. His explanation – that he had received no confirmation from the NUM that they would cast their votes for the NUR candidate – fails on three counts. First, Mr Scargill says he told the NUR that the NUM would vote for the NUR. Second, Weighell did vote for two other NUM candidates – Eric Varley for Treasurer and Owen Briscoe for Standing Orders Committee (Clarke, unlike the other two needed the NUR vote to retain his seat). Third, he did not tell his delegation what he had done until it was exposed by a series of accidents. Such was the suspicion of Mr Weighell by Wednesday that members of the delegation were taping delegation meetings.

The three chief candidates for the succession are Russell Tuck, Andy Dodds and, the left-wing choice, Jimmy Knapp, chairman of the South-East TUC.

Next year's NEC votes will be recorded although they may not be published until months afterwards. Another former NEC member – Doug Hoyle – was also kicked off, by mishap. The NUPE delegation meant to vote for him but did not. □

Susan Gillespie reports

Suicide after 10 days jail

AN ALCOHOLIC man who was sentenced to 18 months in prison for a first offence last June was found dead in his cell 10 days after admission. An inquest last week found he had killed himself.

Brian Ramsden, 46, a gardener from Sunderland, was both alcoholic and depressive and had made several suicide attempts since his youth. While drunk earlier this year he had smashed a glass into another man's face, for which he began his unexpected, long prison sentence at Durham jail on 30 June. He hanged himself there with a sheet on Sunday July 11 while his cellmates were exercising.

Brian Ramsden's file was clearly marked with an F, the symbol used to show which prisoners are regarded as high suicide risks who should either be transferred to prison hospital or kept under 15-minute observation. Neither course was taken with Ramsden.

Ramsden was dependent on anti-depressant drugs. Despite repeated requests from him, from probation officers contacted by his brother Joseph and from his close friend Margaret Cruddas, he was allowed no medication during his ten days in jail. He felt the loss of the librium more acutely because of his similtaneous loss of alcohol and on Saturday 10 July told Ms Cruddas that he would be carried out of the prison in a box before the next week began.

Brian Ramsden had reported twice on sick parade about his condition and had been seen by the prison's medical officer Dr Amitabha Sen on 8 July. Dr Sen said he could not prescribe drugs without the report from his previous hospital, Cherry Knowles. The report arrived four days after Ramsden's death. Dr Sen did have a medical report which noted that Ramsden took librium daily. Nonetheless, Dr Sen thought Ramsden's state was 'stable' and 'satisfactory'. The day before he died Ramsden was also taken to the prison's senior hospital officer James Kerr, but Mr Kerr, who admitted at the inquest that he had no medical qualifications and had not been allowed to see Ramsden's medical record, decided there was no need to call a doctor.

According to his cell mate Steven Williams, Ramsden had also been refusing to eat since 7 July. Yet the deputy governor James Blakey knew nothing of this hunger strike nor, he told the inquest, did he know of Ramsden's visit to the medical officer nor of the non-arrival of the hospital report.

Joseph Ramsden believes the overcrowded condition of Durham jail contributed to his brother's rapidly deteriorating state. The prison cannot cope with more than 700 inmates but at present has 950. Between 1969 and 1980, 176 people killed themselves in British prisons, 46 of them in 1979-80. The prison suicide rate has been estimated as being between six and eleven times higher than the national average. □

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Laurence Spiegel and Mick Pomeroy report

Road to Finchley ruin

MRS THATCHER'S constituency of Finchley in North West London is set to become the centre of a massive planning row which could involve many of London's boroughs and seriously cut the Prime Minister's working class vote. An inquiry began last week on Department of Transport proposals to widen the North Circular Road which runs through the poorer eastern part of the constituency. The battle has already assumed a symbolic importance because of the legal block on the GLC's desire to switch resources from private to public transport.

Local tenants' association, amenity groups and Labour councillors are amongst the opponents of the plan. Camden council, which owns flats in the area, is also against the scheme and the GLC Transport Committee has recently decided not to support the plan. Because objectors fear the proposals are part of the Department of Transport's scheme to build urban motorways through London, pressure groups from further afield are taking a keen interest in the inquiry.

Opposition to the plan was an important issue at the May local council elections when Labour won control of East Finchley from the Conservatives. An eve-of-poll newsletter put out by the Finchley Conservative Association was last week identified as the source of 'misleading information' on the road scheme. Conservative councillor Barbara Langstone had claimed the information had been propagated by residents' associations to stir up opposition to the plan.

Mr Raymond Chance, the Inspector leading the inquiry, has already called in the police to remove one Labour councillor from the proceedings and has told objectors that he is either unable to order the Department of Transport to release transcripts of the proceedings or that they are too expensive. The inquiry, which was expected to run for three weeks, is now expected to run until Christmas. □

Barry Wood and Duncan Campbell report

Dad's Army born again

FOUR NEW ARMY UNITS for internal security activities are now being set up by the Army in Tayside, the West Midlands, East Anglia and East Wessex. Now known as the 'Home Service Force', the units are a partial revival of the old wartime Home Guard – which has already been disbanded and revived several times.

Eventually, 4,500 men are to be recruited to the new units. Some 450 have been recruited for the first four units to be set up. They will guard key installations during the run-up to war. They are not intended to be an anti-invasion force. Britain would not have an effective force to deal with a hostile invasion in the event of war, as almost all active troops will be in Europe.

The new Home Service Force is intended to free regular and reserve units from being tied down on guard duty. This would enable them to take a more active role in combatting public disorder or opposition to war measures, which is the key internal security task during the run-up to nuclear war. After an attack, surviving members of the force might provide guards for emergency feeding centres or government bunkers.

The 'Dad's Army' image of the old Home Guard, however, is coming back in, since the majority of recruits will be much older than those normally sought for the TA in general. The MoD says it wants 'older and more experienced recruits'. Privately, senior army officers do not necessarily expect the new venture, announced by John Nott in April, to be a success. The main problem is that, once you have learnt to shoot, there isn't much exciting training to be done for the job of standing around on guard duty, waiting for the war to begin. □

Rick Rogers reports on new research

Black sixth-formers get best results

NEW EVIDENCE has emerged that black children of West Indian origin get better educational results than white children when they stay on into the sixth form at school. While both black and white children improve their educational qualifications by sixth form attendance, the greater gains were made by black children. More got better exam results and more went on to further education and skilled jobs.

But the new findings serve to highlight the inability of most UK schools to cater equally for the needs and aspirations of black children. The research, headed by Professor Michael Rutter, comes from a continuation of the 1979 study of 12 inner London secondary schools (*15,000 Hours*). The new projects have looked at how the same children fared through the sixth form and up to the end of the first year after leaving school.

Black children in the 12 schools performed less well up to the fifth year. But when all exam results in both fifth and sixth years were accounted for, blacks did better than whites. More gained at least one A level and more had five or more O levels. Only half as many blacks left school with no exam passes. The bulk of children at these schools were of average or below average ability. Rutter maintains that a major element in their improvement was the greater commitment of the black pupils to education. They had better attendance records at school; fewer left without going in for any exams; more stayed into the sixth form.

Such commitment and success begins to explode the myth of the perpetual under-achievement of black children. These results put the onus firmly on schools and exam boards to re-assess what they offer their black pupils.

The 1981 Rampton Report *West Indian Children in our Schools* criticised the inappropriateness of many school curricula and exam syllabuses in a multi-ethnic society. It also found evidence that many teachers channel black children into CSE streams irrespective of ability. The same low expectations were held by careers teachers and employers. Although more of the young black people than white in the Rutter survey had gone on to skilled jobs, twice as many young blacks were unemployed. □

Sarah Benton reports

Blood money

TWO EURO-MPs have promised to raise questions through the Euro-parliament about a subject guaranteed to bring the blood to the cheeks of their male colleagues: menstruation. More particularly, Janie Buchan and Ann Clwyd are to question whether or not it is discriminatory to levy Value Added Tax on sanitary towels and tampons.

The argument, put tirelessly by campaigner Denise Flowers over the last two years, is that to levy a tax on items which women, but only women, have to buy for hygienic reasons is discriminatory. In the words of Ms Flowers's petition, which has now been signed by over 90,000 people, 'men can grow a beard if they so wish, and still not become offensive. A razor blade can also be used more than once, which a sanitary towel cannot.'

This was not the view of Michael O'Halloran, SDP MP, who couldn't see why women should not use 'washable nappies' as women he knew had done. Conservative MP Jock Bruce Gardyne obviously knew a different class of women; they, he informed a startled parliament, used soap.

Women MPs have shown themselves more familiar with the precise use of sanitary wear. Joan Lestor has several times raised questions in Parliament about the levying of VAT on sanitary wear (it yields £15 million a year) and Jo Richardson in 1979 put an amendment against increasing VAT on sanitary wear. The amendment failed though most women MPs voted for it. Female solidarity cannot be taken for granted however. Jill Knight's Private Secretary wrote to the campaign to say it was 'quite ridiculous' to expect '3 per cent of all MPs' (ie women) 'to take on the problems of 50 per cent of the population'.

Ms Flowers's efforts to educate the 50 per cent of the population which is represented by 97 per cent of the MPs have, she says, revealed the depths of men's primitive horror on the subject. Nearly all national newspapers and magazines except the *Daily Mirror* and robust *Farmers' Weekly* have turned from the subject in distaste. The editor of *The Times* told his diarist, who wanted to mention the campaign, that the word sanitary towel was not suitable for the top people's paper.

Such squeamishness would be severely tested by reading some of the letters of support Ms Flowers has received, including reports from nurses on the post-childbirth infections picked up by those women so poor they do use 'washable nappies'. □

The provisional date for the presentation of the petition is 10 November. Anyone who wants to help with it can contact Denise Flowers at 58 Bloxham Crescent, Hampton, Middlesex.

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PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

A modest proposal to end a crisis

THOSE WHOM THE GODS wish to destroy they first require to defend government policy on law and order at a Conservative Party conference. Poor Willie Whitelaw. From the day the agenda for the conference was published, the best Mr Whitelaw could do was to mount an exercise in damage limitation. He had an easier road than last year – but only by wholly avoiding the criticisms directed at him from the blue-rinse, thumb-screw lobby.

Of the 889 resolutions submitted for discussion, no fewer than 104 concerned law and order – three times as many as on economic policy, and four times as many as on unemployment. Even this comparison could give a misleading impression; for many of the resolutions on jobs and the economy were designed to give aid and comfort to Mrs Thatcher. The Tories of Islington South and Finsbury asked the conference to 'congratulate Her Majesty's Government on the more efficient deployment of the labour force achieved by its economic policies'. In South East Essex they reckon 'that despite the continuing world-wide recession the Government has kept the economy in sound order'.

Mr Whitelaw will have looked in vain for similar forms of encouragement among the law and order resolutions. Fourteen of them contain almost identical words – 'This Conference is dissatisfied with Government law and order policy' – which suggests that the Tories are beginning to learn from the 'model resolution' tactics of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. Perhaps there lurks in the shadows a group called The Campaign for Conservative Party Autocracy. I think we should be told.

Put together, the various proposals suggested for a tougher law and order policy make horrendous reading: a return to capital punishment, more 'short sharp shock' centres, an encouragement of corporal punishment, and longer prison sentences. The objective of all this is quaintly stated in a resolution from the Norwood Conservatives. They want 'the Government to recreate the conditions in which a virgin leading a child and carrying a bag of gold could pass on foot from one end of the Kingdom to another without fear'.

THE WEIGHT, if not the quality, of opinion inside the Tory Party on law and order is impressive. Not the least impressive thing about it is the contrast with the Labour Party. The original agenda for last week's conference at Blackpool contained just eight law and order resolutions, out of a total of 518.

In Labour's defence it might be argued that the party is largely united on many issues, such as capital punishment. I doubt if that is the real reason for reticence inside the party. Rather, I suspect that most active Labour members see law and order as a 'Tory' issue – that is, one which is best avoided in any election campaign, for fear that intense discussion in TV studios up and down the country would only serve to help the Tory vote.

Polling evidence certainly portrays the Tory party as the one best fitted in the public mind to improve law and order. Yet could this not, in part, be due to Labour's own apparent disdain for the subject? Roy Hattersley (the shadow home secretary) apart, Labour has shown

Prison over-crowding could be ended quickly with clear savings in public spending and with almost certain social benefits.

little inclination to contest this particular piece of electoral ground – even though all the objective indicators to do with crime show that law and order has got worse rather than better since Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister.

One particular failing was highlighted by Francis Wheen in last week's *New Statesman*: the appalling state of Britain's overcrowded prisons. Overcrowding has grown significantly worse since 1979, and so have all the problems that go with it. There can be nobody except perhaps for a few sadistic prison warders on overtime, who regard this as beneficial – for the public purse, for public safety, or for rehabilitation of prisoners.

If you look in *Labour's Programme 1982*, you will find the statement:

> The next Labour government will take action to reduce the prison population, though we recognise it will be a lengthy business.

That, if you think about it, is a remarkable statement. The same document talks grandly about leaving the Common Market, up-ending the defence policy of the last 35 years, and bringing about the most massive burst of economic expansion in Britain's history; yet, when it comes to reducing Britain's prison population of 43,000 by about one-seventh (the amount that would be needed to end overcrowding), a sudden note of coy realism creeps in: 'it will be a lengthy business'. This is nonsense. Prison overcrowding could be ended within a year. Here's how.

AS WITH THE unemployment figures, Britain's prison statistics are partly about totals, and partly about ebbs and flows. Something like 90,000 people will receive prison sentences this year; roughly the same number will be released. It is the difference between the two figures that determines whether our prisons will get more crowded or less. In order to reduce the prison population to 37,000, and so end overcrowding, the quickest way of getting there is to release 96,000 instead of 90,000 people one year.

(Longer term reforms, to do with sentencing policy, and the scandalous number of people detained on remand, are also needed, of course: my argument is that an end to overcrowding does not need to wait for these things to happen.)

How can the release of this number of people be ensured – with the 'right' prisoners and not the 'wrong' ones released early? The *social* arguments may well be intense – but once decided, the *technical* problem is simplicity itself to solve.

In essence, all you need to do is to rank Britain's prisoners, using a computer, in order, so that those who, by your chosen criteria, are closest to release appear first, and those who are furthest from release appear last. (Programming a computer to perform this task is similar to the task British Telecom has in programming its computer to place its 1,134,093 London telephone subscribers in alphabetical order – something it updates weekly. Placing 43,000 prisoners in some rank order would be only one twenty-fifth the task.)

Once this has been done, the Home Secretary could sanction the early release of the 'top' 6,000 prisoners, and subsequently, at (say) three or six month intervals, authorise the early release of however many prisoners it would take to prevent renewed overcrowding.

It would be a matter of judgment how the ranking is done. One fairly simple way would be to exclude prisoners who have been convicted for violence or sexual offences (about 8,000 people), and rank the remainder by proportion of sentence served. At a rough estimate, an end to overcrowding could be achieved by releasing (or paroling) all those who have served 80 per cent of the relevant portion of their sentence.

Take someone who is serving a 30-month sentence. At present he (or she) would qualify for consideration for parole after one year, and for automatic release – assuming good behaviour – after 20 months. Under a 'ranking' system, this prisoner could come before a parole board after 9½ months, and would qualify for automatic release after 16 months.

This concession would only apply as long as sentencing policy remains out of line with the provision of prison cells. When the two are brought into line, the concession would automatically end. So, in as far as the threat of long sentences deters would-be criminals, the concession should have little or no effect – as there would be no certainty that it would still be operating in five or ten years time.

Different ways of operating such a system could well be debated. But the central fact remains that prison overcrowding could be ended – quickly, with clear savings in public spending and with almost certain social benefits. All it needs is a Home Secretary with imagination and guts. □

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Post-Limehouse blues

HUGH STEPHENSON looks back on the record of the Social Democrats as they prepare for their second annual conference

NEXT WEEK THE SOCIAL Democrats will be bringing up the rear of the 1982 party conferences. One thing can be predicted for sure. The atmosphere in the caravan as it moves from Cardiff via Derby to its final staging post in Great Yarmouth will be a great deal more sober than last year, when the infant party experimented with a 'rolling' conference for the first time.

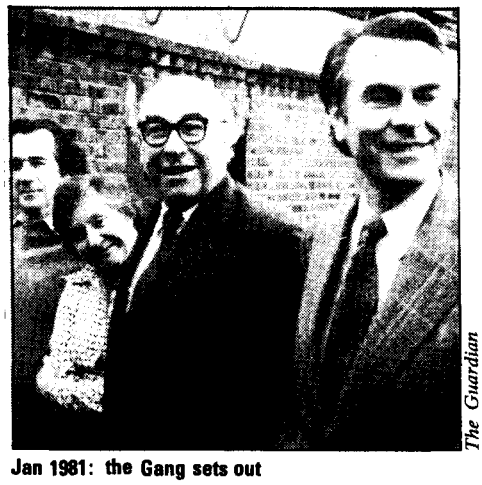
Then the SDP – though it still lacked certain political basics like a constitution, a leader or any policies – was euphorically talking of forming the next government (with perhaps a little bit of help from the Liberals). It requires a considerable effort to recall both the political mood of a year ago and the fact that in those dim pre-Falklands days such hopes and predictions did not seem ludicrous.

Today, though, the SDP is having rather desperately to try that most difficult of all marketing strategies – a relaunch of a product that has failed to capture and hold its target share of the market. By next Friday, when the party packs its bags in Norfolk after the inaugural session of its supreme body, the Council for Social Democracy (S. Williams – President), it will know whether the recovery plan looks credible under television lights, or not.

The SDP's condition is critical and the party leadership knows it. It is not just the sharp drop in its rating in the polls. It has been gently outmanoeuvred by the Liberals in the negotiations about the share-out of Parlimentary seats. If the Liberal-SDP alliance gets below 30 per cent of the overall votes at the next Genral Election – already a considerable recovery from its current position – all but a handful of its MPs would be Liberals. Of the old Gang of Four show, only David Owen could be reasonably certain of re-election. A rump SDP parliamentary party in which neither Mr Jenkins nor Mrs Williams were present would be the end of any credibility for the notion that Social Democrats can dent (let alone break) the mould of post-war British politics.

The SDP has other non-political problems. One is money. Contrary to a general belief, it is and has from the start been the poor cousin of political parties. In the first flush of post-Limehouse enthusiasm last year, several individuals made large donations. But since then it has had to live on what is has been getting from its members by way of subscription. Though as individuals many of those who run industry, commerce and the City found the idea of the SDP initially attractive as a kind of political insurance policy, there have so far been no announced political donations to the party. The only recorded payment of any kind in this category was one of £5,000 in January by Marks and Spencer.

Even this donation was specifically not to the SDP as such, but a contribution to the funding of the joint Liberal-SDP commission on economic and industrial policy. M & S were keen to make it clear that this was not really a political donation, but finance for the study of alternative policies in an area of direct interest to a company like itself. As the year has progressed, it has become less and less likely that companies would follow even this limited precedent.



The Guardian

Jan 1981: the Gang sets out

The reason for this collective corporate hesitation about the SDP is not fear of opposition from shareholders; for shareholders are never consulted about political or charitable donations by the companies which in theory they own. It is, first, fear of a hostile reaction from the Conservative Party in general and Mrs Thatcher in particular. For Mrs T. has shown herself to be a politician with a long and unforgiving memory. Secondly, businessmen do not like frittering money and there is still no guarantee that the SDP is a permanent part of the political furniture. It would look rum when details of political donations were published in company reports in 1983 or 1984, if the whole venture had by then gone up in a puff of smoke. At all events, money has not been coming forward and, from this year onwards, the central finances of the SDP will be further strained by the decision of its constitutional convention in February that local area parties should be allowed to retain a significant proportion of individual membership subscriptions.

This side of a General Election, however, the SDP will not go up in a puff of smoke. One fact, if no other, makes this certain. It is that whatever their political philosophy – of lack of one – may be, the leadership of the SDP and its current MPs are in the main serious political pros, who have burned their political boats and who have no option but to fight on, or quit politics. Roy Jenkins in particular, now in his 60s, has staked the whole of a long and varied career on the venture. Further, in the Warrington and Hillhead by-elections and in his campaign for the SDP leadership, Jenkins has surprised even some of his supporters by showing himself to be an effective and resilient politician's politician. The SDP leadership will not give up simply because the party has slipped badly in the polls. Indeed, from a purely tactical point of view, it is in many ways easier to run a race, coming from the back.

But the SDP's problem is not tactical. It is fundamental. A political party, or movement, can only hope to attract support on one of two bases. Either it represents a political philosophy. Or it represents a substantial vested interest, or class group. So far the SDP qualifies under neither heading.

So far as philosophy is concerned, the SDP's weakness has been best summed up in Professor Ralph Dahrendorf's epigram that the party is simply offering you 'a better yesterday'. Its original attraction to the middle and professional classes in this country, which undoubtedly evoked genuine enthusiasm and commitment during the first eighteen months, was that it would do all the 'sensible' things that governments had been promising during the 1960s and 1970s, while somehow at the same time learning from past experience and avoiding past mistakes. What was – and is still – lacking was any sense that at the core of the SDP there lay any political *philosophy*, capable of providing answers to present and future political problems.

As to representing class interests, the SDP from the start has had a split personality. The membership and the active participants are overwhelmingly white, middle-class. Many came for the first time in their lives into organised party politics in the excited belief that the SDP would be the party to defend their interests. But there are not enough of the middle and professional classes to form the basis of a mass political party.

For a moment, during 1981, it looked as if the SDP might attract substantial support from sections of the working class, particularly the skilled working class which had voted Tory for the first time in substantial numbers in the 1979 General Election. At Warrington in July, Jenkins showed that the SDP could make massive inroads into a traditional working class constituency, reducing the Labour share of the vote to the lowest since 1922. At Crosby in November, Williams by the end of her by-election campaign attracted the support of 60 per cent of the C2 (skilled working class) vote in the constituency.

But it was striking that this support reflected a 'desire for change' and not a positive attraction to the SDP. Indeed, in answer to questions about specific policies, on every one the majority of those polled said that they prefered what the Tories were offering. That remains the main SDP problem. □

This article is based on Claret & Chips *by Hugh Stephenson, just published by Michael Joseph £5.95.*

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LABOUR'S PROGRAMME '82

Another 'resolute approach'

In our continuing series analysing Labour Party policy RON SMITH from Birbeck College argues that Labour has not integrated sufficiently its defence, economic and foreign policies.

BRITAIN HAS a long tradition of militarism. In the 315 wars between 1820 and 1952 which involved over 1,000 deaths, the British participated in 74, many more than any other nation. If war is defined as armed overseas intervention, Britain is estimated to have been involved in 88 wars since 1945. Members of the British Armed Forces died in action in almost every one of those years. These wars were fought in 51 countries, and Britain's global military presence persists, though on a smaller scale. In early 1982 British troops were deployed in Norway, Berlin, West Germany, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Canada, West Indies, Hong Kong, Diego Garcia, Belize, Brunei and, of course, the Falklands, as well as being involved in training and exercises elsewhere.

The ability of *Labour's Programme* to meet its central defence policy objective, 'the promotion of peace and security', depends on the extent to which it can confront British militarism, take advantage of the current disarray in the defence establishment and propose a coherent alternative. As it stands it represents a start, but to constitute a convincing challenge to British militarism which will swing the electorate it requires less rhetoric, more detailed planning and hard choices.

It would be very wrong to regard the militarist tradition as merely a manifestation of ruling class interests. It has had deep popular support. As the response to the Falklands shows, neither rulers nor public have adjusted to the less belligerent post-imperial role commensurate with the UK's humble economic status. Images of war, battle and imperial heritage are powerful symbols in British politics. The forthcoming victory parade will be another example.

This proclivity to use force in international relations is combined with the tendency to spend a higher proportion of output on military purposes than our continental neighbours. During the 1970s UK military expenditure was just under 5 per cent of GDP, as compared to around 3½ per cent for France and Germany. The share is now increasing. The government planned to spend £14.1 billion on defence in 1982-3 as compared to £12.7 billion on education and science, arts and libraries, and £13.6 billion on health and personal social services. The cost of the Falklands war and garrison could add more than a billion to that. Replacement of equipment lost in the conflict is discretionary, and depends on future policy, but full replacement could cost another billion.

Britain traditionally combined imperial militarism with a minimal involvement of the military in domestic civil society. There are some tentative indications that this phase may be ending. The transfer of tactics acquired in Northern Ireland to the mainland, the concern with subversion and low-intensity operations in certain parts of the military, the development of a Home Defence network which integrates military and civilian command structures, the preparations for the use of the armed forces in industrial disputes, and the transformation of police and legal structures in response to riots and terrorism – all these are signs of more domestic militarism. The effectiveness of Falklands heroics in mobilising public support, however temporary that mobilisation may be, provides an added inducement to use the military, symbols of national unity, in a domestic role.

Labour's Programme does recognise this threat; and the development of unions in the armed forces, to which there is a qualified reference, would be a countervailing force. But ironically the main opponents of increased involvement of the military in domestic conflicts may well be the armed forces themselves. Important sections would see such commitments as a damaging distraction from their principal preoccupation with preparing to oppose the Soviet Union. They would also be concerned about the inevitable degradation of military skills, efficiency and values which would result from involvement in domestic society and politics. Such involvement changes promotion patterns, organisational structures and attitudes in ways that are detrimental to combat efficiency, which is why military regimes (such as the Greek and Argentinian Juntas) have poor warfighting records. Many in the British military think that any involvement in politics is polluting.

DESPITE THEIR political prominence both imperial adventures and domestic involvement are peripheral to the major concerns of the defence planners and service chiefs. The 1980s present serious dilemmas over roles, resources, technology and production which would have arisen whether or not there had been a revival of the peace movement and of an interest in military matters among socialists.

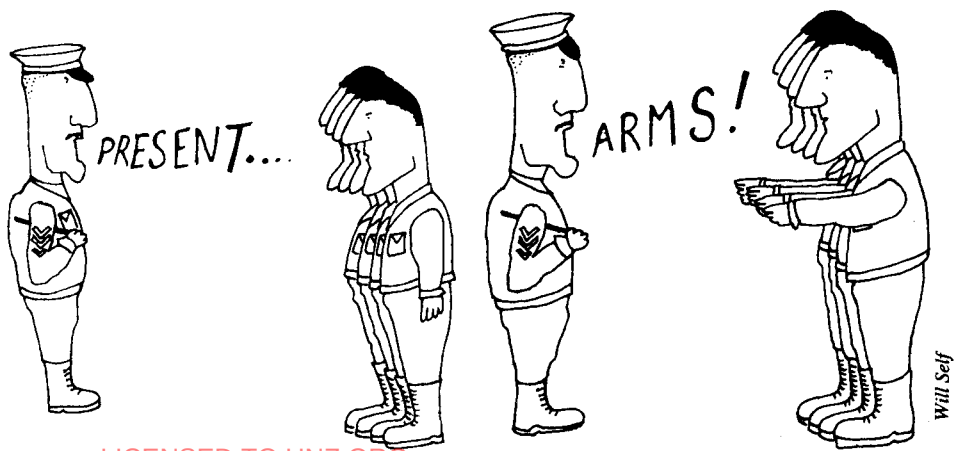
Weapons procurement and budget allocation in the UK are organised around four main functions of the armed forces. These involve providing strategic nuclear capability; ground and air forces in West Germany; naval presence in the Eastern Atlantic and Channel; and defence of the UK against external attack. All four are NATO functions, in that they are each linked to joint US-European operations against the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries.

The forces involved in these four functions are to some extent flexible and can be deployed outside the NATO area. But significant intervention capability requires specialist transport, equipment and logistics, which are expensive.

If, post Falklands, it is thought necessary to maintain a significant capability to intervene outside the NATO area this will involve a large investment programme. The problem is that each of the other functions should also involve large investment programmes. Modernisation of the strategic nuclear force with the purchase of Trident will cost around £10 bn; new tanks and weapons are needed for the ground forces in Germany; new fleet submarines and surface ships are required to meet naval roles; and manufacturers have also plans for two next generation aircraft.

British defence policy is an object lesson in the old adage 'Wealth creates power, and power destroys wealth.' Britain's aspirations to power, have imposed a crippling burden on the economy which once provided the base for imperial expansion.

These dilemmas have two benefits for any movement for an alternative defence policy. They have split the closed ranks of the defence community, bureaucratic battles are now being fought in public. This



Ron Smith contributed to Protest and Survive *ed. E. P. Thomson, Penguin. This article is a revised version of a longer paper which will appear in the* Socialist Economic Review 1983, *Merlin Press.*

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has resulted in some unlikely alliances being formed (such as Lord Carver and the CND against Trident), and in much more information getting into the public domain. Last month's unprecedented and almost unconstitutional public criticism of Britain's naval policy by Admiral Sir Henry Leach, Chief of Naval Staff, is the most obvious manifestation of the dispute which has split Whitehall since the run-up to the 1981 Defence Review.

The instability generated by Britain's current defence policy also provides an opportunity for a change of direction. The pattern of the post-war period is unsustainable and major transformation is inevitable. Mr Nott can walk out on Sir Robin Day and indeed he can walk out on politics but the choices of defence still have to be made.

The present *Labour's Programme* reflects the current dilemmas without resolving them. As it says, 'Britain is unique amongst European NATO countries in the range of military roles we cover and exceptional in the high share of gross national product we devote to financing these roles'. But it does not say which commitments will be sacrificed and which programmes cut in order to reduce defence expenditure to the average proportion of GDP spent by other European NATO powers. Cancellation of Trident, which seems inevitable whoever wins the next election, will not be enough on its own.

In fact, asides in the *Programme* seem to suggest more military spending: 'Our conventional defence policy will have to be discussed with our allies to avoid the danger of an increase in the deployment of battlefield nuclear weapons by other NATO nations'. This seems to imply enhanced conventional forces on the Rhine. Likewise, 'maintaining an adequate naval and air defence contribution' may mean not only keeping open dockyards, and proceeding with a new frigate, but also spending on the Agile Combat Aircraft whose development bill alone is a billion. To say 'effective conventional defence will continue to require an efficient industrial base' gives a blank cheque to the arms firms who argue that UK sales are already too small to allow them to be efficient. Despite the hostile tone of *Labour's Programme*, the defence establishment are likely to find the detail reassuring. They read that 'Labour opposes the 3 per cent increase in real terms in defence expenditure', but they will remember which government originally made the 3 per cent commitment to NATO, and they will not see any detail about the cuts to come. As a coherent strategy for change, Labour's defence programme compares unfavourably with its Alternative Economic Strategy (AES).

Whatever its defects, the development of the Alternative Economic Strategy was a major achievement. It provided a positive alternative on which to oppose monetarist ideology, and to plan the transition to a rational form of economic organisation. In the area of defence, a positive alternative is needed in the same way. Opinion polls, demonstrations and CND membership show the breadth of dissaffection among the electorate with current defence policy. For instance 63 per cent of the public disapprove of the Government's plans to buy Trident. To transform this potential constituency into a politically effective force, and to capitalise on the uncertainties within the establishment, requires the development of a coherent alternative to prevailing military ideology.

Just as the Alternative Economic Strategy cannot be narrowly economic, an Alternative Security Policy cannot be narrowly military. Defence issues are inherently intertwined with perceptions of the role and status of the UK in world affairs and with the structure of domestic industry. Therefore the alternative would have to deal with an appropriate foreign policy for the UK, the military posture that would support that policy, and the economics of the disarmament required to adjust to it.

Defence strategy is the servant of foreign policy, and must be framed in the light of diplomatic objectives. There is no great love of diplomacy among British socialists. What they take to heart are more homely concerns such as poverty, racism, freedom – matters of economic and social policy, whether at home or abroad. The grand vision of the seamless web of international relations and its organisation has become the preserve of reactionaries. From Metternich to Kissinger, the tradition of directed international strategy has largely been the province of those concerned to restore the status quo ante, and it is their formulations which have been dominant.

Will Self

'I DECLINE TO STATE THE OBVIOUS'

Some of the major elements in *Labour's Programme* are withdrawal from the EEC, unilateral disarmament and removal of US bases. Labour's economic proposals also have major international implications, such as trade controls, a real North-South dialogue and planning agreements with multinationals. Each would transform the way the UK conducts foreign policy and engender major conflicts with traditional allies. We would need to form new links to implement them. For instance, European countries have objective interests in opposing US imperialism and could provide essential support. However, in the middle of a conflict with Britain over EEC withdrawal, they are more likely to support the US to gain extra leverage in negotiations with London. Non-aligned and Third World countries would provide natural allies and support for socialists trying to break the economic and military chains that bind Britain to international capital. That support will not be forthcoming if economic controls disrupt their exports to the UK. Domestic objectives impose conflicting demands on our links with other countries. To implement those objectives will require a clear strategy to co-ordinate relations.

Trade, capital flows, treaties and international organisations have all increased the interdependence of the capitalist world and multiplied the linkages both between countries and between issues. Ad hoc negative responses are a recipe for disaster. A neutralist socialist stance which involved severing major economic and political ties to Western Europe would involve a different structure of defence from one which emphasised the joint development of an integrated socialist Europe. Technical questions of military organisation cannot be divorced from their political objectives. But once the foreign policy objectives are spelled out, the programme still will not carry conviction until the technical details of deployment and conversion are worked out.

It seems likely that an Alternative Security Policy in keeping with *Labour's Programme* would reduce the risk of nuclear destruction, increase both British and European security and cost rather less than the present one – perhaps of the order of 3 per cent of GNP rather than 5 per cent. It is important to note that nuclear disarmament alone would not generate great cost savings. As weapons, nuclear arms are cheap relative to conventional ones; and to meet present defence goals without those weapons would be expensive. The goals and policies have to be changed at the same time. It would not be complete disarmament or total pacifism; nonetheless, economic adjustments would have to be made as military expenditure was reduced.

A wide variety of evidence suggests that if there is the political will, if demand is expanding, and if there are appropriate industrial policies to promote structural adjustment the economic conversion from armaments presents little difficulty. Clearly, none of these conditions hold in the UK at the moment, and part of the policy programme would involve creating them. Demand expansion should be provided by the Alternative Economic Strategy.

Disarmament has another link with the AES. A problem with most variants of the AES is that they would face short run supply constraints. In the longer run growth in demand, industrial restructuring and workers' involvement in production should lead to increasing productivity and expanding supply. But as the economy first starts to grow it is going to need skilled labour and modern capital goods on a massive scale. The recession has meant that the investment to provide these has not been done. But there is a reservoir of talent, well suited to provide them: the military industry is a highly intensive user of skilled labour and scientific and technical workers, and its capability in electronic and mechanical engineering is exactly what is needed to develop and produce that next generation of industrial equipment. *Labour's Programme* should recognise the crucial role that disarmament can play in the regeneration of British industry, and plan to take advantage of it. □

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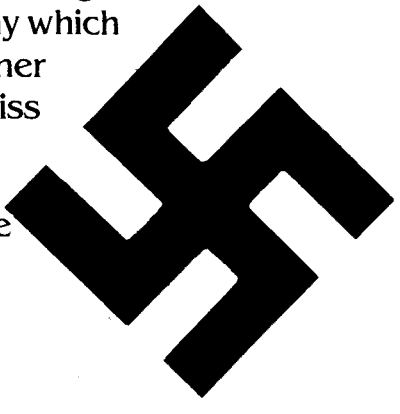
Read any good books recently?...

History has settled on Nietzsche and Wagner as the chief architects and forefathers of Nazism. As so often, history has been over-hasty. One Englishman and one Frenchman were largely responsible for the philosophy which spurred Hitler's rise to power. In this week's Times Higher Education Supplement, Ivor Morgan and Michael Biddiss examine the careers of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Count Gobineau and show, in an attempt to separate fact from legend, how even their conservative thought was distorted to serve the Nazis' violent ends.



Also in this week's issue:

- *Alan Ryan on John Rawls*
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THE BOMB — 2

How Labour went unilateral

BEN PIMLOTT argues that it has been the supposedly conservative trade unions that have pushed the Labour Party to unilateralism

WHY did the two-thirds majority for unilateralism at this year's Labour Party Conference (4,927,000 to 1,925,000 on the key vote) fail to stir the nation? First, everybody assumes that a Labour government with control of the House of Commons will not be elected in the foreseeable future. Second, almost everybody takes for granted that, even if one was, the unilateralist commitment is one that definitely would not be carried out.

Both assumptions may be right. Behind the complacency of the pro-Bomb lobby lies a recollection of the first CND campaign — which briefly captured Conference in 1960, and then melted away like mountain snow at the approach of spring.

The 1960 decision grew out of what has been described as a 'middle-class radical' peace movement with almost no industrial roots at all. A unilateralist motion at the 1958 TUC was massively defeated, by 5½ million to 1 million votes. When unilateralist motions were carried at the famous Scarborough Conference in 1960 — as much because of hostility to Gaitskell's leadership as on the issue itself — margins were tight. Though an AEU resolution was carried by 407,000, a TGWU demand for the rejection of any policy based on the threat of nuclear weapons was only accepted by the tiny majority of 43,000. Even this degree of support, however, was extremely shaky. After the Conference, three key unions — the shopworkers, the railwaymen and the engineers — quickly reverted to multi-lateralism. By the summer of 1961, any chance that banning the bomb would become official policy had disappeared.

The 1960 challenge was not repeated. For a couple of years Aldermaston Marches continued to get bigger, but trade union leaders and serious politicians had already moved on. Between the 1964 and 1979 elections, the issue was almost universally ignored.

Yet unilateralism did not completely die, and it is possible to trace a very slow increase in interest through the 1970s, providing a background of knowledge and commitment that gives CND in its second phase a much better chance than in its first. A lot of this interest came from the same kind of people who had backed the first campaign, but there was also a significant amount of support with trade unions — often from people who had been involved at grass roots and branch level in the 1960s. Many of these — young and unimportant at the time of the Scarborough decisions — had progressed up the union hierarchy and a few had reached senior positions. By the early 1970s there were leading officials and executive members in a number of unions whose earliest experience of national politics had been in the CND movement. Only a few took part in the new campaign before it had once again become a mass phenomenon. But many more remained loyal in principle, giving quiet support to unilateralist resolutions in their unions, and providing the basis for a 'silent majority' that would become vocal when the issue re-emerged.

In some unions, unilateralism became part of a sentimental heritage, so that new members were vaguely aware of the commitment without knowing why it was there. This was true of the TGWU, which had been the campaign's strongest union backer in the early sixties. During the fallow years, when unilateralism was forgotten nationally, several TGWU regional committees continued to give support to CND. Biennial Delegate Conferences of the union discussed disarmament resolutions, usually with a unilateralist flavour, almost as a matter of course.

It was not just the T & G that stayed loyal to unilateralism. Most of the other important unions — NUPE, the Boilermakers, Natsopa, the sheet-metal workers, the draughtsmen, the construction engineers and the firemen — who were unilateralist in 1960 and did not renege in 1961, continued to give moral and financial backing to CND even in its darkest period. After a while, a few others — ASLEF, SOGAT, ACTT, SLADE, the tobacco workers and the bakers, for example — added their own support.

In 1972, this submerged, quietist growth of union support was consolidated in a Labour Party Conference resolution that was quite as unilateralist as anything that appeared on the order papers in 1960 or 1982:

> This Conference is opposed to any British defence policy which is based on the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons either by this country or its allies and demands the removal of all nuclear bases in this country.

It is an indication of how far the 1960 debate had really been about the leadership rather than the Bomb, of the declining status of Conference decisions, and of public and press indifference to the nuclear issue, that a decision which had once split the party from top to bottom went almost unnoticed when it was repeated 12 years later.

But the 1972 decision was different from the decision at Scarborough in another way as well. This time there was no reversal. A year later, at the initiative of the transport workers, Conference reaffirmed its unilateralism — by 3.2 million to 2.5 million, a bigger margin than either of the votes that had threatened the leadership in 1960.

These resolutions, wholly ignored by the parliamentary leadership, came from the

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unions: neither the country at large, nor even many constituency parties, were yet moved by the issue. The real popular renaissance did not begin until the end of 1979, at precisely the moment when the Labour Party was moving in a direction that could only help the unilateralists. This was the era of the 'constitutional issues'. Neither the NEC, nor the unions, were in a placatory mood. In December 1979, the General Executive Council of the TGWU passed a resolution calling for opposition to cruise missiles on British soil, and urging the TUC to conduct a massive campaign on this theme. Other unions followed. Early in the New Year, the Labour Executive decided to throw unilateralism into the cooking-pot of issues which a special Labour Party Conference (to be held in May 1980) should consider. The sense of a new urgency was reinforced by a Labour Party Disarmament Rally in June.

At Scarborough in 1960, unilateralism had been the key issue between Right and Left. At the Blackpool Conference in 1980, it was way down the agenda, swamped by the infamous 'constitutional' issues. Favourable votes on two unilateralist resolutions became one of Conference's more predictable aberrations. While the popular press reported that Conference had been taken over by 'tinpot Trotskyist dictators' from Constituency Labour Parties, the reality, of course, was quite different – and far more significant. The decisions had come from the unions, not the local parties. The changes to policy and to the constitution came about because of a union desire to move into Labour Party politics more decisively than ever before. This meant that there was a fragility to some of the Left's victories. However, as we have seen, unilateralism was in a special category. It should therefore come as no surprise that the swing to the right at Conference in 1982 has been accompanied by an actual reinforcement of the unilateralist position. The process has been swept along by the Social Democrat defections which included the most spirited opponents of unilateralism.

Will there be a shifting back? Popular movements based on big demonstrations, win or lose, do not usually last more than a few years. This is without taking into account the capacity for obstruction of foreign service and military establishments, should they perceive a serious threat. Nevertheless, unilateralism as an attitude, and not just a campaign, seems much more firmly based than in the past. An important link has been made – especially in public sector unions and in unions most affected by the slump – between arms spending, the dole queues and the collapse of the Welfare State. Support continues to grow – according to a recent Marplan poll, from 23 per cent in the spring of last year to 31 per cent this September. Nothing may happen in the short run. But once the labour movement establishes a new tradition, it does not normally forget. □

For this article, the author has made use of material in (eds) Ben Pimlott and Chris Cook: Trade Unions in British Politics, *Longman (£6.50), just published. The author is Lecturer in Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London. He is the author of* Labour and the Left in the 1930s.

WHITEHALL

Clips and jabots

JOHN GARRETT on the Government's refusal to bring the Civil Service to account.

IN MARCH, the Commons Treasury Committee produced a report on Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service'. Last week the government published its reply.

Given all the emphasis on behavioural science and the development of human resources over the last thirty years, the report was remarkable in that it hardly touched on the difficulties of improving the performance of civil servants at a time when they are working for an employer whose overriding aims are to make 100,000 of them redundant and drastically to reduce the living standards of the rest.

However, the report made some valuable recommendations on opening up departments to public scrutiny by requiring them to develop new information systems. The committee observed that monitoring the performance of public bodies depends on the existence of financial and statistical systems which display the efficiency of management, the effectiveness of policies and programmes and the proper appropriation of funds. It, therefore, recommended that departments should produce statements, attached to the annual estimates and public expenditure White Papers, which set out their intentions, their objectives and their results.

The government's reply: 'not accepted' . . . 'there are limits on the amount of information that can manageably be contained in the White Paper and Estimates' (Joel Barnett used to say the same as Chief Secretary in the last Labour government).

The committee had then proposed that the powers of select committees should be increased: first, by allowing committees to table motions, for vote in Parliament, requiring Ministers to present information relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes ('not accepted'); secondly, by enabling committees to use the 600 auditors of the Exchequer and Audit Department to examine government programmes on their behalf ('not accepted'). The government also gave its complacent opinion that select committees 'have sufficient and appropriate powers' . . . subject to well-established conventions, to call Ministers to account.

The government was willing to agree to a recommendation that the new Management and Personnel Office (MPO) should carry out its responsibilities for the Civil Service from the same building as the Treasury. It is also keen to promote MINIS, a high-tech system developed by Mr Heseltine at the DoE, which lists what everybody does in that department and has enabled him to dispense with a quarter of them. MINIS permits the regular examina-

Housing Associations Inquiry

The Housing Committee of the GLC has decided to set up an independent inquiry to consider all aspects of GLC Housing Association funding.

Part of its brief will be to investigate possible abuses in connection with the funding of Housing Associations by the GLC and possible abuses by those concerned with the management of such Housing Associations, and any related abuses.

Anyone wishing to submit evidence to this inquiry may do so.

All communications may be made confidentially, and will be treated as such by the inquiry, which will operate totally independently of the GLC. This request for information is directed to the members of the public, as well as to past and present employees of the GLC and of Housing Associations. Evidence may be submitted to The Secretary, Housing Associations Inquiry, Room 151, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB, (Telephone 01-633 4616).

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tion of some £170 million of the £5000 million annual spending by Environment. Mr Heseltine can pore over every penny spent on office carpets, but still knows nothing of the results of the money being spent, say, on Toxteth.

The MPO is setting about its tasks with a will. Ominously, two of its five major objectives are to promote the motivation and performace of staff in the Civil Service. It is also drawing up guidelines on good management practice in typing and messenger services. It is clear that the MPO is turning out to be a weaker version of the old Civil Service Department: allowed to advise on the efficient use of paper clips, but not on the effectiveness of top management.

Still what right have MPs to demand modern information systems from Whitehall departments? The annual House of Commons Commission report, a truly deranged document, tells us that running the Commons cost £15,844,000 last year, but gives no further breakdown. It does, however, record the entitlement of the Clerk of the house to one lace jabot and cuffs, one lawn jabot and cuffs and one Bob Wig (and case); and the Nurse to six pairs of black stockings at £1.05 a pair. I'm convinced that's one jabot too many. □

MINERS

Will the miners fight?

Having elected Arthur Scargill by a landslide a year ago, the miners now have to decide whether to back him by voting for industrial action. PATRICK WINTOUR reports.

MINERS ARE AN unpredictable bunch. For instance, three days before the historic NUM strike in 1972 *The Times* published an editorial saying:

> Coal stocks away from the pits are large enough to stand a strike for weeks, if it does not spread, with only marginal disruption to industry and commerce as a whole. Almost all gas now is from the North Sea, many coal-fired stations can switch to oil at a pinch and the National Union of Mineworkers is much less of a power in the councils of the labour movement than it was. Miners have steadily abandoned the strike habit.

By the 39th day of the strike, 1½ million workers were laid off, 12 power stations closed and the government was falling over itself to improve the offer. Similarly in 1977 most commentators expected the miners to accept productivity schemes: a ballot rejected them. Few foresaw the lightning strikes of February 1981 while last November most expected the pay ballot to reject the government's offer. But 55 per cent of the miners voted to accept.

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Arthur Scargill remains confident that his leadership, a united executive and a tactically astute campaign can produce a different vote this year. Indeed after Monday's delegate conference decided to ballot the membership on the Coal Board's 8-9 per cent offer, Scargill was in a mood of near-Thatcherite resolution. He claimed he had not lost a ballot in Yorkshire during his Area Presidency and that he did not expect to lose his winning habit now. Power stations had only nine weeks' coal stocks, he went on. The overtime ban would cut production in the pits by 14 per cent. The Triple Alliance was intact. Rallies would be arranged to take place before the ballot on 28-29 October. At these it would be explained that the full 31 per cent demand might cost the National Coal Board £300m, but the Board could afford it. Over £110m had been saved through job wastage in the last year. Coal stocks had been undervalued by the Board. Interest, depreciation and other charges had increased 30 per cent last year (costing the Board £200m). Why could the miners not be given a similar percentage rise this year, especially since the total wage bill had risen by only 5.7 per cent last year?

Mr Scargill rattles off such figures at breakneck speed, leaving most journalists' shorthand several percentage points behind. But, for all these statistics, Mr Scargill faces an extraordinarily difficult task in winning the 55 per cent majority he needs for industrial action. Convention has it that miners drive home from the pits in their hire-purchase Fords to face young families, mortgage demands, bills left over from their holiday on the Costa del Sol and a front door that can hardly be opened for the white goods within.

In reality the average age of miners ten years ago was 43, now it is not much lower at 39. It is however true that miners are wealthier than they were. They earned only 89 per cent of average manufacturing wages in April 1970, but 123 per cent of the average after the 1974 Pay Board Inquiry. Since then miners' earnings have kept pace with the national average and done better than most other public sector workers. The major change in their earnings has been the shift to productivity and overtime payments introduced locally after rejection in the 1978 national ballot. In 1970 basic pay made up more than 83 per cent of miners' earnings; in 1981 it was down to 65 per cent. Thus this year the top grade face worker earned a basic wage of £121.55 but his gross pay was £168.00.

The NCB's 8-9 per cent offer appears relatively generous. It should keep miners at the top of the league table for male manual workers where they have been since 1975. It will also represent a real wage increase, since the rate of inflation is falling below 7 per cent a year. Scargill may argue that the miners have a moral duty as the vanguard of the public sector to break imposed pay norms. But he needs to couch his arguments in industrial rather than political language. There is a mood of co-operation amongst the miners. Productivity last year reached record levels. There has also been a massive drop in absenteeism. The increase in shift output per man year in the last three years – an attendance measure – would have represented an extra workforce of 13,000 men at old performance levels.

Faced with this situation, Scargill has made the astute tactical decision that the strike issue should be linked, not just to pay, but to pit closures. Here he is on much firmer ground. His argument is that unless the NUM forces the Coal Board to heed the union now, many more pits will close.

In February 1981, the Coal Board's proposal to close 23 pits early led to strike action. But since then 14 of those 23 pits have closed, three others are under threat and two more (not on the 1981 list) have also closed quietly, one by one. In two years 20,000 jobs have gone. In short, the NCB may have lost the February battle, but it has won much of the war.

Its success comes in part from the skilful handling of closures. None of the men employed in the pits that closed last year has been made compulsorily redundant, according to the Coal Board. Eighty-four per cent of them have been transferred to different work. The seven hundred who were made voluntarily redundant were

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presumably attracted by the recently improved redundancy terms.

The effect of all this has been to reduce savagely the number of new young recruits to the industry. In 1979/80 the Board recruited 25,800 new employees. Last year this figure was down by almost three-quarters. This process, typical of the Thatcherite recession, makes it difficult for trade unions to mount an effective opposition.

SCARGILL'S AIM has been to make pit closures a national rather than local issue. For years, Scargill has talked of a 'hit list' of pit closures and for as many years the NCB have denied the existence of such a list. But it is obvious that the Coal Board must have a central list of which pits it wishes to close. Indeed Norman Siddal, the Coal Board chairman, told this year's NUM conference that the costs of 12 per cent of the Board's output are responsible for an annual loss of £250m.

It is known for instance that South Wales' pits lost heavily in 1981-2 and that colliery output per shift was less than half that of North Derbyshire. But the NCB refuses to say which of the 30 pits in South Wales were making that loss. Extrapolating from confidential NCB computer printouts of pit profitability, Paul Routledge, the Labour Editor of *The Times* published a list of 45 pits in jeopardy, which together produced over 16m tonnes of coal, or one eighth of the NCB's output. The size of the onslaught facing the NUM is indeed large.

Coal sales this year are a little above last year's figure, but only through doubling the sale of cheap exports and increasing pit head stocks, rather than winning much more of the domestic market. At the same time the Board has a large investment programme underway for developing new pits and making existing ones more efficient. Next year, the Selby pit goes into production, which eventually will add 10m tonnes more a year to existing capacity. Areas, such as South Wales and the North East, are receiving little investment and thus are likely to bear the brunt of the closures – unless energy demand picks up, or the government agrees to prolong subsidies beyond 1983-4.

Scargill is trying to use existing closure threats, such as Kinneil in Scotland and Snowdon in Kent, to alert miners to the general contraction of their industry and the need to remove a government which is directly responsible for low energy demand. But even if he does convince them that mass closures are in store, he has to convince them that strikes are the cure.

His claim that there is only nine week's coal in stock is open to challenge. Currently, total distributed coal stocks stand at just over 28m tonnes. By November, total inland consumption will be around 2.3m tonnes a week. Before the 1972 strike, distributed stocks were at almost 24m tonnes, but inland consumption was much higher. After eight weeks, assuming that the strike starts in mid-November, power stations will still have 10m tonnes in hand – more if there is a big switch to oil-fired stations. So, if Mr Scargill wins a mandate for industrial action when the result of the ballot is announced on 1 November, his union will have to draw a deep breath. Their challenge will just be beginning. □

EDUCATION

Bad debts

JON SOPEL attacks Sir Keith Joseph's plans for student loans

IT IS NOW CLEAR that the government intends to push through a student loan scheme, unless there is a major public outcry against it. It would take the place of all or part of the present student grant system and would have the most far-reaching implications for higher education.

The idea of loans to students to finance their studies is nothing new in the UK. Ironically in 1970 Margaret Thatcher, then Education Minister, rejected loans on the grounds that they would 'have the effect of reducing people's chances of going to university where they come from parents whose incomes were fairly well down the line'. Now, however, the arguments in favour of a student loans scheme have become much more sophisticated.

The idea of a loans system was always attractive to Tories because of its apparent reduction of public spending. But Tories found that evidence of such schemes in other countries weakened the case. In the US, the equivalent of £800 million has been written off as bad debts since 1963. Two of California's largest banks have now refused to administer a loan system, because of the high rate of default. Nearer home, the Danish government in 1976/77 had to pay the commercial banks £3½ million to clear outstanding debts.

The other obvious appeal of a pure loans system was ideological. Education financed by bank loans would be subject to market forces. But the danger becomes apparent that students might in such 'free market' circumstances not opt for the expensive, high cost engineering and science courses but would opt for courses involving the least: the arts and social sciences. This was not the direction in which higher education was supposed to go.

Today more compelling arguments and

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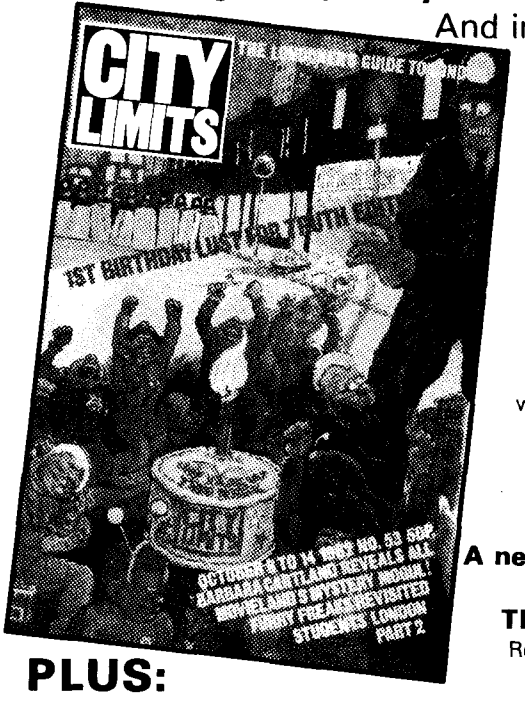

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proposals for a loans system are put forward. The new option under discussion, known as the 'partial loans option', is in essence a grant, to be topped up by a low interest bank loan, to be paid back by the student sometime after finishing his or her course. This retains the scheme's ideological appeal, without biasing the choice of courses.

Government and DES officials have given only skeletal details of what will be proposed, but the partial loans option has received surprising support. A recent paper from the Policy Studies Institute, for example, argues that it has a number of clear advantages. First it would give people the opportunity to follow non-Council for National Academic Awards courses. At present only courses which have its official blessing will qualify for Education Authority grants. This has meant that course planners have been over-concerned with providing a qualification at the end, so that a course may gain CNAA recognition. Secondly, a partial loans option would sweep away the parental means test which, for so long, has been a barrier to student autonomy. Thirdly, partial loans would allow people to move in and out of higher education as need, motivation and personal circumstances dictated. And, because it would be cheaper in the long run, resources would be released for underfunded sectors of higher education.

The existing inflexible student grant system is widely blamed for the fact that the working class, women and mature students are so under-represented in our institutions of higher learning.

The National Union of Students takes a very different view. While conceding the present grant system is far from perfect, it finds it preferable to any loan system. The NUS wants an improved, non-means tested mandatory grant. It argues that progressives who support a move towards loans are guilty of naïvety, and of strengthening the hand of a government whose intentions towards higher education are suspect. The NUS argues that it is naïve to suppose that any savings would be pumped back into higher education. In reality they would be swallowed up as public spending cuts.

Foreign experience also shows how quickly the grant element in a mixed grant/loan scheme becomes undermined, once public spending is under pressure.

With 20,000 places having been cut from the university sector alone by this government, few can believe that it has, in fact, been seriously attempting to broaden the base of education. Indeed, a combination of fewer university places and a student loans scheme might quickly produce a situation which perverted the original Robbins principles for higher education to: 'anyone who achieves satisfactory "A" levels and can display a willingness and ability to pay back a large bank loan, shall have guaranteed for them a place in higher education'!

Real dangers are attached to the introduction of any loans system, but those who want to retain the grant system will have to mount a defence of it quickly. For, as those at the Tory party conference this week are now convinced, time is fast running out. □

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City boob

THE CITY of London's Falklands victory parade will confirm the British government's determined ignorance of all things Latin American. The day of the parade – 12 October – is traditionally celebrated throughout Latin America as the date when Christopher Colombus discovered America. It has become a symbol of the unity between the Hispanic communities of the Old and New Worlds.

So the British decision to celebrate its colonial victory on the same day has angered many people. 'It is a deliberate slap in the face,' one Spanish diplomat told your correspondent. The organisers of the event were warned in advance – by British Embassy officials in Brazil and by the Ministry of Defence. Their public response was that the coincidence was just 'unfortunate'.

There are long historic links between the City and the military, going back to the days of Lord Nelson, who received a gold sword from the grateful City for his services in clearing the high seas of 'Spanish marauders'. This month's celebration was decided after senior officers had intimated to the Lord Mayor that there had not been a proper reception for the survivors of the war. A parade organised with public funds might have been difficult to justify, so the Corporation took it on itself to provide the £50,000 for the lunch of honour.

As much of an act of homage to the armed forces, it will be a political tribute to Prime Minister, who will take the march past and the salute. No member of the Royal Family will be present. The Queen will be on a tour of Australia and the South Pacific.

The impact of recent goodwill tours to Latin America by junior ministers – Cranley Onslow to Brazil for the Foreign Office, Peter Rees to Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile for the Department of Trade – will be largely nullified by the image of Mrs Thatcher's public rejoicing over the humiliation inflicted on Argentina. □

Raul Sohr

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China's 'responsible people'

Class may have been erradicated in China but, according tto JONATHAN MIRSKY, status, division and perks remain.

NO FOREIGNERS WERE expected for the execution, so for a few seconds the Security Police were too stunned to hide the dead bodies, hands tied behind their backs, lying in front of the railway station. The large crowd was far more impressed by the suddenly arrived 'foreign guests', (as Chinese are instructed to call tourists) than by what had happened in front of them.

The travellers had received special permission to attend a three-day Buddhist festival in Xining, capital of west China's Qinghai province, which is usually off-limits to tourists . It was plain to them that the execution had been carried out only minutes before they stepped down from their train. When the police finally reacted and dragged the bodies away, only their heads were bloody. Almost no blood had dripped onto the paving stones.

Executions in China are summary. Generally they are carried out on the day of sentencing, by shooting the condemned in the back of the head. Like many things in the Peoples' Republic, capital punishment (which is prescribed for a whole range of crimes ranging from murder and rape to acts described in the Criminal Code as 'counter-revolutionary') is a routine event for Chinese, who either witness it, or read about it in official notices.

Chinese-reading foreigners can also learn about executions, but they are invisible unless one slips beneath the carefully arranged curtains behind which Chinese life proceeds.

The Chinese insist this curtain does not exist, Hu Yaobang laid down last year that foreigners should be encouraged to see 'the true face of China'. By so doing, Hu said: 'Instead of bringing shame on our socialist motherland, as some people are worried, we can make our honesty and true friendly feelings known to foreign visitors and make them believe China is reliable.' China's London Embassy has missed this message. It insists that visas for independent travel are not available, when in fact they are easy enough to secure elsewhere.

Foreign tourists, indeed, are forever being assured as they whisk about that what they are seeing is not half as lovely as what they might see if they had more time. 'You are *qi-ma- kan-hua*, riding on horses while looking at flowers'.

The actual state of affairs, disclosed by what travel agents term 'independent, unaccompanied journeys,' is that China is a very poor country in which there is rarely enough of anything, and where status entitles you to space, better working conditions, more varied food and – most of all – deference. This status includes everyone with 'responsibility', from hostel managers to the six members of the Politburo's Standing Committee.

It is fair to ask in what country is this not true. But the blunt truth is that few if any countries proclaim the liquidation of the exploiting classes as vigorously as China, while ensuring that those with 'responsibility', no matter how slight, go directly to the head of the queue for whatever is on offer.

Class may have vanished in China, but rank remains. As the traditional saying went: 'If a man becomes an official, even his dogs, cats, and chickens mount into heaven'. As the more honest leaders admit and all Chinese know such is the situation in the Peoples' Republic today.

Jonathan Missky

The plutocrat . . .

What Chinese officials want is position, not money, which still buys little. There are many bureaucracies – civil service, military, industrial, academic, artistic divided by grade, (24 of them, for instance, for government workers; 12 for university staff; 16 for actors and musicians), each with its own salary and perquisites. The press rarely mentions these distinctions, although all citizens are aware of them and some take pleasure in rattling off the pay and privileges that go with each level. An expert can spot dozens of subtle variations in car size, colour, and make, and the number, colour and position of their side and rear curtains.

Whereas for ordinary Chinese, restaurants in some parts of the country run out of food within 20 minutes of opening, beds in dingy hostels often are impossible to obtain without small bribes (the same can be true for bus and train tickets), even minor officials, armed with their *te-wuan,* (special privilege), can get what they want. *It is therefore no surprise that students at* Shaghai's Fudan university, in a rare poll, recently placed *te-wuan* first on their list of national problems.

Even the most devil-may-care tourist, or the most devout Friend of China, notices that in restaurants certain Chinese – dressed in neatly laundered white shirts, pressed trousers, and leather shoes in summer, tailored suits in winter – are eating shut away from the public gaze, either in private rooms or behind screens.

These are the 'responsible people', Party members and cadres, dining on better food and often signing for it on behalf of their 'unit', or workplaces.

They are the same Chinese who occupy Soft Sleepers on trains and ride about in the carefully graded chauffered limousines. On trips they sleep in the luxurious 'rest houses' in which fortunate foreigners occasionally find themselves if local tourist hotels are over-booked, with their private baths, over-furnished rooms, and excellent food.

SUCH TOP-LEVEL retreats are commonly guarded by heavily-armed soldiers. Three years ago, while the senior cadres staying in the Hofei resthouse in central China's Anhui province were stuffing themselves on meals cooked by a chef who had prepared President Nixon's Shanghai banquet during his 1972 state visit, hungry townspeople approached the gates demanding an audience with the officials inside. According to two American teachers staying in the building, when the supplicants refused to disperse they were fired on by the sentries, who killed three of them and left the bodies lying in the entrance drive.

Secluded guest houses are part of the *nei* in China – the within, the exclusive, the private. *Wai* – outside, excluded – is for foreigners, unless they are 'experts' working in the country, from whom not everything can be disguised, or the few travellers who escape the clutches of the China International Travel Service, not for an afternoon stroll, but for days and weeks in a row.

A foreigner spending a month travelling in China 'independently and unescorted', riding 'hard-seat' or, better, 'hard-bed' on trains, jammed into long-distance buses, renting a bed, not a room, in a hostel, and eating in filthy, sullenly-staffed canteens, begins to feel like a sans-culotte with his nose pressed to the glass watching the nobs guzzle.

No tour-guide from the Travel Service smooths and camouflages the way for such travellers. Instead, even if only for a moment, they encounter the insolence and indifference of officials for whom the old Maoist slogan 'serve the people' is no more than a fading wall-poster. They operate, instead, according to one of the fashionable buzz-phrases: 'Get Rich'. For the 'responsible people', Courtesy Month, in March, must have been as habit-changing as the constant reminders not to spit in public.

Every now and again, during imperial times, the cry *"da-guan"* went up: Smash

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the Officials'. And within the last decade, during the first stage of the Cultural Revolution, the original smashing of the elite, as many of the ex-victims will concede, arose from pent-up popular outrage that the basic promise of socialist revolution, equality, would not be kept.

Hundreds of thousands died during those years, and millions suffered, largely because of the leadership's taste for vengeance and bloodletting, but the need among the masses to get even with the Haves, provided Mao and the Gang with plenty of foot-soldiers.

In the Party's new constitution it is stipulated that party members must be 'the first to bear hardships and the last to enjoy comforts.' The six members of the Politburo's Standing Committee who run China may not be aware of the gulf that separates them from the masses. Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues, like favoured foreign tourists, are isolated in their luxurious mansions and travel in immense black cars which allegedly are not required to brake for pedestrians because their precious passengers might be thrown about.

But the leaders must know. They give speeches as if they did, and issue proclamations deploring selfishness, and calling on their followers to be humble.

But most Chinese are very poor and none of them want to be. They can see who benefited most from the last three decades of Party rule, and that perched on every rung of the narrow ladder to success are those lords of creation, China's 'responsible people.' □

SPAIN

The Golpista

DAVID GOLLOB argues the Army has remained an independent force in Spanish society.

THE DISCOVERY OF A sophisticated plot to overthrow the Spanish Government on the 'Day of Reflexion' in three weeks' time is yet another indictment of the government's continuing failure to reshape the nation's armed forces since the death of Franco.

Unlike the 23 February coup (23-F), in which a task force of armed officers and *Guardia Civil* occupied the Cortes and seized TV stations, the October coup, christened Operation Cervantes, would have sealed off Madrid in a massive display of armoured divisions to control all access by road, rail and air, cutting telephone and telex communications as well. In other words, instead of depending on the impact of a few dare-devil officers to spark off a wide-scale military rebellion, Operation Cervantes counted on the allegiance of about 100 senior officers in key regiments stationed in and around Madrid, ready to take command on the given signal.

The names of these officers have reportedly been found among documents seized from the three officers detained in connection with the plot. No further arrests have yet been made. Claims have also been made that civilians are involved, but here again, no action has been taken.

The failure to take action against civilians involved in the 23-F coup led by Colonel Tejero (and the lenient detention conditions enjoyed by convicted officers) are two factors that have encouraged this latest conspiracy.* General Milans del Bosch, it is true, was sentenced along with Tejero to 30 years; yet, both are serving their sentences in comfortably furnished prison suites where they receive and entertain.

Curiously, the Crespo brothers, two colonels arrested in connection with Operation Cervantes, were regular visitors of Tejero; while Colonel Munoz Gutierrez is said to have visited Milans, carrying the copiously documented coup dossier in his hand. Given the freedom enjoyed by the 23-F detainees, it is conceivable that they coordinated the entire operation from their prison in Madrid, using the formation of a *golpista* political party, Solidaridad Espanola, as a cover. Tejero is president of the party.

Another theory is that Operation Cervantes is the child of the 'Colonel's coup', planned for May 1981, but aborted by Tejero's impulsive storming of the Cortes. Here again, no investigation was conducted and no names ever revealed.

Tension exists, particularly in the army, between generals appointed by democratic governments to replace retiring old-guard Francoists, and colonels, who because of the Fascist views, have been passed over for promotion. Indeed, Colonel Munoz Guiterrez, is thought to have been a link between Milans and the Neo-Fascist leader, Blas Pinar. Such colonels have continued to occupy key positions in their regiments, making totally ineffective the work of generals promoted for their loyalty to the central government. In Operation Cervantes, the colonels would have taken command, ignoring the authority of the Chiefs-of-Staff.

This coup attempt (and others like it) was believable and feasible because the Spanish army is still organised as a force of occupation, rather than a force of national defence. This explains the number of tanks poised to roll into action on the streets at a moment's notice. What was once Franco's guarantee of survival, is now an uncleared minefield through which the politicians are doomed to tread until it is dismantled.

In a bid to diminish the impact of the coup, politicians have stressed that taking power is one thing, while running a country requires the consent of both of Spain's civilian population and of the international community. Few *golpistas* have worries on either score. They also draw strength from the remaining infrastructure of Fascist organisations, whose access to the media has never been impeded, and whose members are allowed to run paramilitary training, from political parties and hold mass rallies.

Operation Cervantes could have counted on the support of some 100,000 Fascist militants round the country, ready to take over the civil power. As for the international community, *golpistas* tend to ignore NATO in favour of an Hispano-American commonwealth. □

God's Worried

by Roger Woddis

When a **New Statesman** Weekend Competition called for anagrams of contributors' names, Martin Sherwood came up with a winning entry for Roger Woddis: 'God's Worried'. Hence the title of this collection which covers a decade of Roger's verse for the **New Statesman.**

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AMERICA

Nurses face the draft

SUSAN JAFFE of the Village Voice on US Civil Defence

IN THE UNITED STATES Department of Defense, the experts think the best way to make peace is to prepare for war. They believe that, if the enemy sees we're ready to fight, then he will not pull the trigger, press the button, or act too hastily. The latest effort involves civilian hospitals, which are being asked to plan to take in soldiers wounded in a war with the Soviet Union – the war everyone must be completely ready for in order to prevent it. Pentagon officials trying to sell the new 'Civilian-Military Contingency Hospital System' are having difficulty convincing health care workers that it will never be used.

'It is no secret that the Soviet Union's awesome military power poses a threat to the United States,' according to the Pentagon's 41-page document on the programme. 'A future large scale war overseas could begin very rapidly and produce casualties at a higher rate than any other war in history.' The anticipated patient load will outnumber the 20,000 military beds now available in the Veterans Administration hospital system, which is already filled with the victims of past wars.

The United States is the only country in the world to have used nuclear weapons against an enemy and President Reagan has maintained publicly that the US would use nuclear arms again to defend itself. Reagan has now revived civil defence plans aimed to ensure (at least on paper) that entire cities would be evacuated before a nuclear war and that, afterwards, 'normal' life could continue for the survivors.

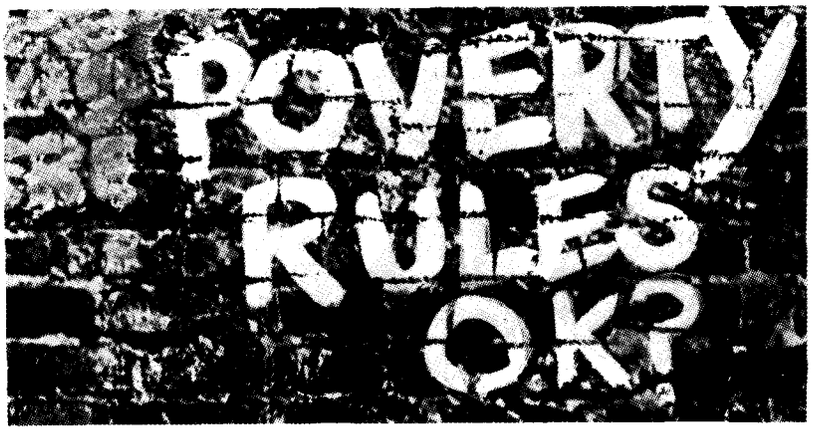
During a meeting held in New York on 20 September, Pentagon officials told hospital administrators that the hospital plan is based on a conventional war fought in some other country. 'It is possible', Navy Commander William Lambert admitted under questioning, 'that things could get out of hand under any circumstances, things could get out of hand in the Middle East and you could have nuclear weapons used. Nobody has a crystal ball.'

'There's no way in which a war between the US and the Soviet Union will remain conventional,' countered Dr Jonathan Lorch, president of the New York City chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, a national group with 20,000 members. 'Since we are talking about a war that will become nuclear, we must realize that there are no medical contingency plans to take care of the victims. This plan will create the illusion that there is some sort of medical response possible, but there is no preparation for nuclear war.'

Lieutenant-Commander Podge Reed, director of the Civilian-Military Contingency Hospital System, was asked how the plan would function in nuclear warfare. 'I have no idea,' he replied. Nevertheless, he was pleased that 560 hospitals in 44 cities have volunteered 48,000 beds when needed. The first test of the plan was conducted on 28 September when 400 soldiers with simulated injuries were sent to over 40 hospitals in the Washington D.C. area for 'treatment' – and then lunch.

The National Union of Hospital Employees, with 120,000 members, opposes the plan for another reason. Union vice-president, Judy Berek, calls it 'an involuntary draft' of hospital staff. 'They're asking administrators of hospitals in the United States to volunteer all of their employees to participate in a military operation, which in fact will encourage a war. The more we prepare, the more likely it is that something will happen.'

The Pentagon is so busy these days preparing and rearming, that a few flaws in the hospital plan have gone unnoticed. Major cities where the large hospitals are located are supposed to be evacuated before a full-scale war. Even if medical treatment was possible, hospital employees are not supposed to stay behind. If they do remain, the military may find the quality of health care inadequate. Many urban hospitals have shortages of nurses, beds and supplies – even before an influx of patients from the battlefield. 'If the federal government wants to protect our young people in uniform, they have to develop the facilities,' said Dr Donald Meyer, of the 2,500-member Doctor's Council in New York. 'If they can find the money for destruction, they can find the money for healing.' Preventative medicine, however, is not part of the Reagan administration's defence strategy. □



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DIARY

Barry Jones MP

RIPPLES OF applause consistently accompany Mrs Thatcher whenever she negotiates the obstacles across the one-acre size platform. It is a perfumed and confident conference. There are legions of conventionally dressed, plumped-up, somewhat raddled women. They are the Leader's strongest supporters. I recollect two great, commercial advertising successes of the 1960s. They were 'Mrs 1970', who, semi-undressed, extolled the virtues of central heating and 'Miss Playtex' who kept her midriff flat by subterfuge. Mrs Thatcher's most devoted supporters appear to be a legion of faded 1960s look-alikes. They adore the Leader and appear to be turned on by each entry, wave or smile. These delegates should read Jonathan Swift for an antidote to their fixation. He loved passionately his Stella. Poor Swift. Ultimately he turned himself off. He wrote, 'Stella shits'. Certainly this is the conference for the Falkland orgasm. It makes Tory eyes gleam and their cheeks redden. Delegates clap until their palms sting. The Union flag inspires.

This summer I attended the memorial service of a brave Welsh guardsman killed at Bluff Cove. Both Chapel and Sunday School were packed. Stair-rod rain belted on the many outside. A youngster in khaki trumpeted the last post. The grief of the bereaved and dignified family grouping was compelling. To put the Falklands Campaign into perspective the British Cabinet should read the savage invective of the 1940s book, 'Guilty Men' by Cato. Not only for the brilliant description of war on the shelterless Dunkirk beaches but also for the blunt preface. It describes how in 1793 a crowd of angry men burst into the French Convention. Their demand was for a dozen guilty men.

○

Enoch Powell is the evil genius of British politics who lost his way. Cecil Parkinson is the apprentice who fell on his feet. Cecil, wearing one of the hundreds of Conferences' 65p blue carnations, received a standing ovation for a hesitant address. He gulped incredulously, disconcertingly like a worried Stan Laurel, as the Prime Minister and her consort led an ovation which then obliged him to make a Nixon-like, arms outstretched, acknowledgement. Margaret animated herself so strongly that the diamonds of her brooch, earrings and several rings flashed fiercely and repeatedly in the TV lights. It was an inept naive speech which said too much. The Tory high command want to lumber Labour with the blame for mass unemployment lest a resurgent Alliance Party hand the key of No. 10 to Michael Foot. Cecil looks like a Home Counties groom at a sunny, country-club wedding breakfast. But on enunciating his punch-line, namely that the PM is a great National Leader, he displayed political muscle by forcing half the Cabinet present on the platform to applaud enthusiastically, hypocritically and at humiliating length.

○

One hour later, at a fringe meeting, Britain's master populist offered the Tory Chairman the certainty of electoral victory. The maverick Mephistopheles' Manifesto is simple. Black people from the New Commonwealth must have priority training. Thus trained they are a National Asset to be compulsorily deported as a substitute to financial overseas aid to their supposed country of origin. Powell's address hypnotised 500 in the purple-carpeted, mauve-painted Top Rank disco. Before the golden tinsel of the prosecenium arch curtains, dressed like a Calvinist deacon as if intent on intimidating Sunday School, he sat immobile, staring narrow-eyed towards the disc-jockey's console. For a 70-year-old his voice was immensely powerful. Every gesture rehearsed and decisive, he spoke from a carefully prepared script. Radical young Tories displayed contempt but counter-balancing their decency were, perhaps forty approving young lads from Brighton Town itself who might be seen behind Brighton FC's goal at a Saturday home game. Macho-male Tory delegates clutched pint beer mugs with outspread hands. Without striped shirts, eschewing blue carnations, they gave the impression that they wouldn't been seen dead holding a cocktail glass. Powell was listened to in heavy, respectful silence. The balconies bulged full. Enoch Powell record sleeves were stacked against the platform table. His signed, outdated paper-back tracts were piled on trestle tables at the rear. After twenty minutes of the old corruptive magic, shoulders hunched, finger pointing, voice hissing low, his audience too was ram-rod still captivated. There were many moist eyes and mouths agape.

○

Tebbit. This is the ablest Tory of them all. A pin-striped quisling scion of Greater London's working classes, he now directs his bureaucratic apparatus to furnish legislation designed to undermine organised Labour. Tebbit is my tip to outflank the ambitious and patient Howe in the Tory leadership stakes. In the Commons Tebbit turns in cynical and cheerfully brutal performances. Tall, cadaverous, sallow and often crouching defensively at the dispatch box, he is disconcertingly inventive and quick witted in the cut-and-thrust of Question Time. He sits glumly between equally right-wing Parliamentary Secretaries. One is a hard-nosed provincial Silk; the other the elegant old-Etonian son of a former 1922 Committee Chairman. These two, before he was humiliatingly demoted, were Jim Prior's minders, trained on the job in the Tory Whips' Office whence they came. Thatcher like Cromwell dispatches her rebels to Ireland. There are slimy, reptilian policy trails, leading from this Employment Department. Tebbit, for example, seeks the abolition of the Fair Wages Resolution and brazenly sought a £15 per week wage for school leavers. Gerald Scarfe is too tame, too fastidious a cartoonist of Government ministers Sometimes humourously, sometimes contemptuously, Opposition spokesman, Eric Varley copes with Tebbit. Varley once played as a professional footballer in Chesterfield FC's No. 5 shirt. It is an interesting confrontation. Varley, the ex-miner and current Treasurer of the British Labour Party against the most diseased mind in British politics.

ROGER WODDIS

Sliced bread

A resolution submitted to the Conservative Conference at Brighton describes Mrs Thatcher as 'the greatest thing since sliced bread.'

How fitting, yet how curious,
In truth it can be said,
That while they talk of excellence,
Their faith is in sliced bread.

Though dieticians recommend
A wholemeal loaf instead,
It doesn't match, my goodness me,
The goodness of sliced bread.

There's just one thing that separates
The Leader from the led:
While roughage is her middle name,
They'd rather have sliced bread.

The hungry sheep look up and clap,
Whatever they are fed,
Revering Margaret Antoinette:
'Oh, let them eat sliced bread.'

With jam today in short supply,
It must be thinly spread;
And jam tomorrow has no taste,
Not even on sliced bread.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ 'Mr Gordon Woodward (C) said the use of the church for a night shelter would be going against the principles of the Church. He added: 'This building is sacrosanct and it would be wrong to put these sort of people into it.' – *Oxford Times* (A. Summers).

☐ 'Ewen Hall, Wood Street, was a dazzling glow of autumn colours for the autumn show of Barnet Horticultural Society. Treasurer Mrs Olive Bunvan is pictured with the cup she won for interpreting a current news event. She used dark red and orange dahlias and rudbeckia to portray the siege of Beirut. – *Barnet Independent* (David Gutman).

☐ 'A team of Imams will conduct midday prayers on Fridays at schools with large proportions of Moslems. Sikh pupils will be able to wear turbans – but only in the school colours.' – *Daily Telegraph* (G. M. Moger).

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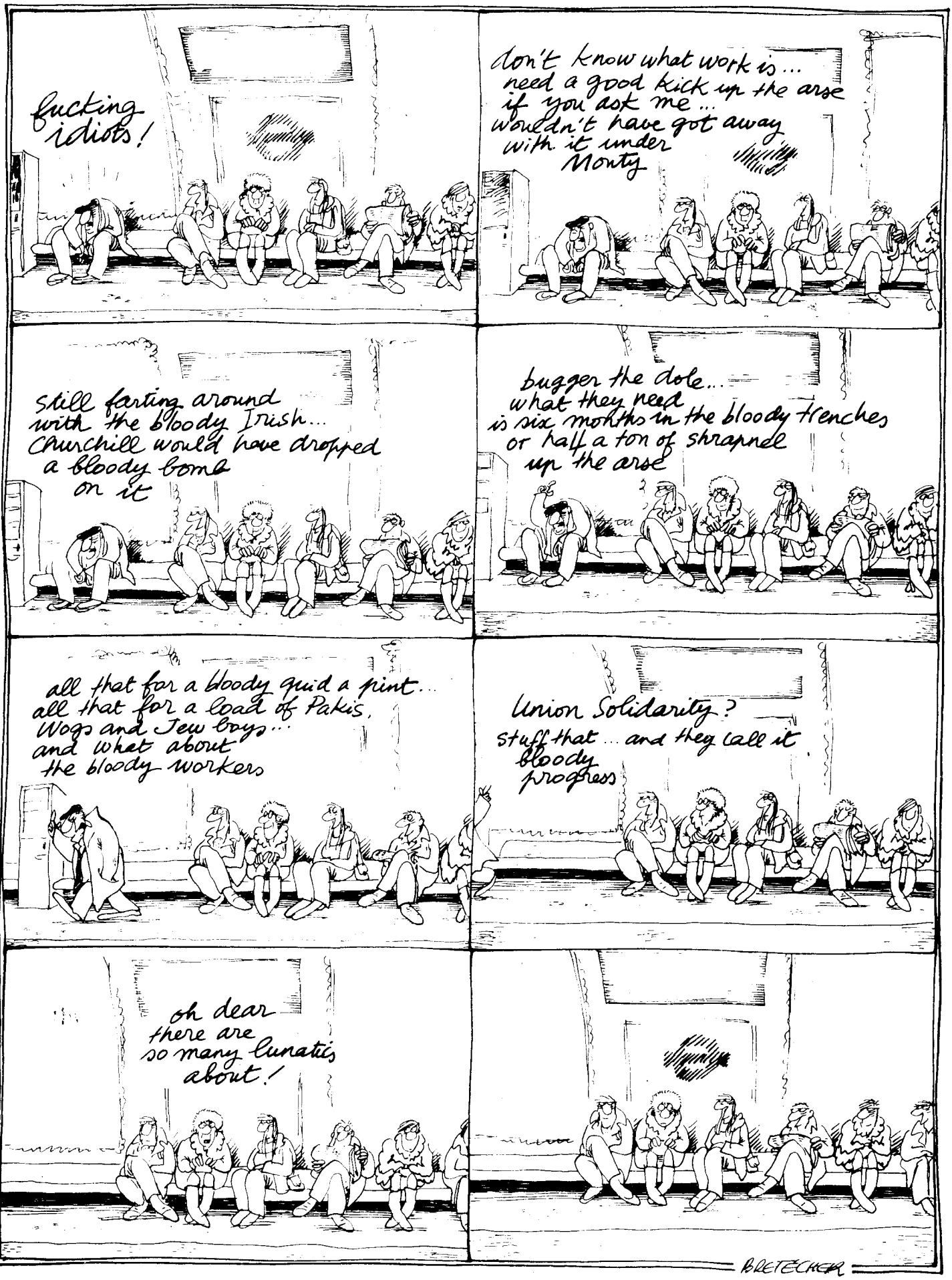
BRETECHER

WARREN STREET


fucking idiots!
don't know what work is... need a good kick up the arse if you ask me... wouldn't have got away with it under Monty
still farting around with the bloody Irish... Churchill would have dropped a bloody bomb on it
bugger the dole... what they need is six months in the bloody trenches or half a ton of shrapnel up the arse
all that for a bloody quid a pint... all that for a load of Pakis, Wogs and Jew boys... and what about the bloody workers
Union Solidarity? stuff that... and they call it bloody progress
oh dear there are so many lunatics about!
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Formula for fudge

Tom Megahy, MEP, Yorkshire, South West.

Barbara Castle denies doing a U Turn on EEC withdrawal. In one sense this is correct for she has consistently argued in the same terms behind the scenes since Conference took its overwhelming decision. As an experienced political campaigner however, Barbara must surely have anticipated the reaction of her decision to 'go public' now. It is not just our mutual colleagues Alf Lomas and Richard Balfe who write of U Turns. Your own political Editor, Peter Kellner, argues (*NS* 1 October) that Michael Foot is heading for a U Turn on Common Market withdrawal that will bear some relevance to that put forward by Barbara Castle. *The Economist* and other correspondents in the serious press and TV take a similar view. Worse, Roy Hattersley, fresh from his exposition of pro-EEC sentiments in Strasbourg, now adheres to 'the Castle line' and there is joy in some quarters of Red Rose.

Well, have they all misread the article? There could be another explanation! Despite her strong affirmation that the Treaty of Rome would make it impossible for a Labour Government to carry out its economic programme, Barbara's conclusion that we should not even threaten withdrawal provides a 'formula for fudge' which will be eagerly seized by those elements in the party anxious to evade party commitments.

With regard to the tactical argument I would dispute Barbara's interpretation. Leaving aside the major question of whether any one issue determines an election, we could well throw away a major political card should (as I suspect) the EEC budget issue become fiercer. As to European Socialists we would of course get initial plaudits for deciding to stay in the EEC but could we really expect continued support for defying the treaties? Not on your life. In all the current discussions in the European Parliament about reform of the treaties our Socialist colleagues mostly argue for greater power to European institutions and less obstacles to the free movement of labour, capital and goods.

Significantly however Barbara seems to be having second thoughts on our legal vulnerability. In her reply she now says that we should repeal the European Community Act. But if we do we shall already be half way out – why not finish the job?

Local delivery

*Dr D. J. MacInnes, Health Centre, Kirkwall, Orkney.*8Ms Corbishley

Ms. Corbishley states in her letter (*NS* 27 August) that women in labour in Orkney have to travel 70 miles to be delivered. This is not so.

Deliveries are conducted locally at the General Practitioner Maternity Unit in Kirkwall, the principal town in whose environs the majority of the population live. The small number of pregnant women in the outlying islands (the furthest 30 miles away or about 15 minutes by Islander aircraft) come in to our Unit as a precaution about a week before they are due and are usually grateful for the opportunity of a

rest and chance to look around the shops.

In contrast to the picture Ms Corbishley paints of the hospital delivery, here 'machineless, dripless births' are the rule with father taking an active part and with drugs for pain relief provided if requested. The staff who are well known to the women have plenty of time to give advice and help both before and after the birth. Although a small number of women whose babies are at special risk have to be flown to the consultant unit at Aberdeen there is a high degree of satisfaction with the service provided and requests for home deliveries are almost unknown. Our perinatal and maternal mortality rates are about the lowest in the country.

It is disturbing that an organisation which presumes to advise women on childbirth should be so unconcerned with checking the facts.

Michael Foot's semantics

George Price, Tiverton, Devon.

Following the article by Peter Kellner (*NS* 24 September), I listened carefully to Michael Foot's speech at the Labour Party Conference on Tuesday and particularly the bit on Nuclear Disarmament.

Well, he did say that he had supported CND in the past and still does so. This must mean he supports Unilateralism; he also said that he would work for getting rid of nuclear weapons in Britain and the rest of the world. This could mean Multilateralism.

Now it is possible to be a Unilateralist and a Multilateralist in that sequence but not simultaneously since Unilateralism demands prior Unilateral action.

So, I fully expected Mr Foot to end his speech by telling us that he would fudge, fudge and fudge again for the Party he loved or at least that he wasn't a nudist and did not want to go naked into any chamber, but he didn't say either.

It is possible that he does not intend to fudge this issue nor adorn himself with a nuclear-armed donkey jacket, but it is strange that he does not say so.

We shall have to leave the Conference without knowing what his priorities are, so it seems that he could not have read Mr Kellner's advice.

Googlies & flippers

Jane Baird, London N1

Sally Dimon (Letters, 10 September) argues that Abdul Qadir had no lbw adjudications in his favour at the last test because of 'some blatantly racist decisions' by the umpires. She goes on to plead for 'the absolute necessity of educating umpires to appreciate the very real needs of third world bowlers'.

I wonder if there is not a more creditable explanation for the umpires' behaviour. Pakistan is a third world country; but it is also governed by a ruthless military dicatatorship. Your paper has often supported the idea of an economic boycott of dictatorial regimes. Perhaps we are now witnessing the extension of this argument on to the field of play itself, in order to bring further pressure to bear on General Zia. 'No lbws without liberalisation' seems to me an admirable rallying cry, and quite in keeping with your paper's support for socialism and human rights.

Which is the dummy?

Judith Cook, 5 Park View, Sheepy Magna, Nr Atherstone, Warwickshire.

In November 1980 I wrote a story for the *NS* about nuclear waste being particularly vulnerable in Suffolk – at the Leiston level crossing outside Sizewell and in Ipswich railway sidings. The CEGB in a response to your paper said that the flasks I had been shown were dummies.

During the last couple of years other people, querying having seen nuclear flasks, have also been told they are dummies, notably the Secretary of Oxford Community Health Council who saw one being transported rapidly along the M6 and enquired as to its safety. I have long puzzled, therefore, what all these dummies are for.

Last week there appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* an item saying that in future British Transport Police, including a dog handler and his animal, would be on duty to guard flasks on railway trucks at the Leiston level crossing outside Sizewell and then on their journey to Ipswich. What am I to make of this? Or are British Rail and the CEGB employing dummy policemen with dummy dogs to guard dummy flasks, similar to those I saw?

George Orwell

T. G. Rosenthal, Chairman, Secker & Warburg Ltd, London W1

Professor Bernard Crick (*NS* 17 September) is right to say that 'the so-called *Complete Essays, Journalism and Letters* (of George Orwell) are not complete' but they never set out to be, which is why they are in fact entitled *Collected Essays*, etc.

However, your readers may be interested to know that, under the editorship of Professor Peter Davison, a new edition of the *Essays, Journalism and Letters* is being prepared which will be approximately 50 per cent longer than the current edition and will appear, we hope, in late 1984.

Doubting the obvious

Norman Fulford, 13 Goodwin Street, London N4.

Duncan Campbell has muddled what he was told by the Spies for Peace about the emergency centre for the National Government (*NS* 10 September). During our activities in 1963-1965, we didn't doubt that there was such a place, but we did doubt whether it was at Hawthorn, because everything looked too obvious. We looked for it elsewhere in the West Country and in Wales, but never in Surrey, the latter being a different operation.

Apologies

to solvers for omitting the title of the crossword last week. The heading should have been

Salamanca 60
'Fill-in'

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The matter with Britain

BERNARD CRICK questions Samuel Beer's identification of 'pluralistic stagnation', 'class decomposition' and 'collapse of deference'

SAM BEER'S earlier *Modern British Politics* (1966) has long been regarded by the wise as the best compact account of the origins and conditions of modern British politics. The book was not precisely history nor precisely sociology; it was a set of extended notes towards a synthesis of the two methods. Certainly it towers above anything written in this country on the general character of our own politics. So the new book arouses great expectations. The jacket (I am an unashamed blurbologist) carries some superlative advance comments. Tony King says, 'This is one of the best books on British politics I have ever read or expect to read'.

Beer begins by arguing that from the end of the war until the mid-Sixties 'the record of British politics was a story of solid democratic success'. 'Building on pre-war foundations' governments of both parties 'created a welfare state and managed economy which provided proximate solutions to some of the worst problems of industrialisation and the class system'. Let me not pause to quarrel with a weasel word like 'proximate'; such was, indeed, the general view. But he now thinks that balance between parties (general policy) and pressure groups (particular interests) has broken down: the British political system is failing as a mechanism of 'public choice', again hardly an uncommon view. But Beer adds this odd disclaimer:

> I am not primarily interested in the merits of the policies that were decided on, but rather in the quality of the process by which decisions on policy were made, and, especially, failed to be made. I am not, for instance, concerned with showing that at times British governments 'spent too much money' and so contributed to inflation. That is for economists to say. The question I ask of any spending outcome is whether it was the result of choice, or drift.

The disclaimer narrows the subject matter of the book to something manageable called 'political science', excluding economics – just as, fair play, most economists object to 'political factors' as intrusions into the purity of their models. Beer's version of political science has always semed to me, until now, to be infinitely more realistic and meaningful for the general reader (i.e. meaningful) than the model-building approach of the majority of American students of politics. But to exclude 'merits', the outcomes of decisions and economic factors is, to put it mildly, to create an *almost* equally abstract, or rather – as emerges – idealised picture of how British politics should proceed.

What if the outcome of a choice is bad and of a drift good? Can a social system be said to work well or badly apart from its outcomes? And would Sam Beer, Tony King *et al* (*al* includes Shirley Williams, as we'll see) be thinking that Britain is 'against itself' if Gaitskell and Crosland's 'small but steady' growth in GNP had continued? In such happy days those who talked doom-talk of the 'Britain against itself' kind would have been correctly labelled as 'socialists', extremists anyway. Would there be 'political contradictions of collectivism' if the economy had stayed in better shape? There was a lot worth reforming in British political institutions even in the 'you've never had it so good' days of relative affluence, but would any of us perceive a crisis in the polity if the economy had not declined so dramatically? Is there really a *political* explanation for the decline of the economy? Grumbles about trade unions and 'ungovernability' (a melodramatic image for the faint of heart) are very short-term stuff compared with, say, our historical failure to plan for a second industrial revolution (our living in the past in all possible senses), the gentrification of our entrepreneurs and (to lose all friends) the lack of an ideology of productivity in contemporary British socialism.

WHAT ARE the 'political contradictions of collectivism' in Britain which Beer holds to have transformed our system in the last 20 years? They are 'pluralistic stagnation', 'class decomposition' and 'collapse of deference': each dealt with in a section of this book. 'Pluralistic stagnation' has damaged the old choice mechanism by which party government could mediate between consumer and producer groups. 'Class decomposition' has eroded the social foundations of political authority. And the 'collapse of deference' and the rise of the 'new populism' have destroyed 'the ideal foundations of civic culture.'

'Pluralistic stagnation' is seen in 'the scramble' of the last 20 years for welfare benefits, wages and subsidies. Far from avoiding economic judgments, Beer assumes that this growingly uncontrollable scramble was the prime cause of inflation. Unions can be blamed for so much, but that is wild exaggeration and the earlier Beer would have known it.

'Class decomposition' is the second leg of Beer's collapsing British stool. Are we now to reinterpret the thesis of his *Modern British Politics* as meaning that it was the class system which held the political system together?

The 'collapse of deference' is also an odd cause for Beer to exaggerate and to bemoan. I only regret that so much of the alleged collapse is superficial, almost consciously channelled into fields of popular culture where it threatens no great interests if those interests keep their nerve and remember the old proverb about 'sticks and stones . . .'

'STILL, if lack of trust is what ails the British people', he meditates, 'the pleasing integrity of Shirley Williams might prove to be charismatic'. How he would have gone for any student who so misused Weber's concept of 'charismatic authority'. This is Kennedy clan speech-writing not social science. He praises her earnest but woolly *Politics is for People* quote extravagantly, although her operative ideals of 'quality of life, participation and decentralisation' are precisely what he calls 'romantic' in others. He also accepts her rationalisation that the Social Democratic break with the Labour Party after the special Wembley Conference was because her friends wanted a more democratic way of electing the leader, forgetting that a few weeks before she has been rattling on about a threat to the Parliamentary activities.

Shirley Williams was writing her book as a visitor to the Kennedy Center at harvard at about the time Beer must have been beginning to write his book. The high-minded muddles of the pupil have had an awful affect on the master's usual historical caution.

Our system is inflexible and stagnant, perhaps, but only to a degree; we entered into Europe and damned nearly devolved Scotland. Beer sees the class system in decline (I wish it was), but says nothing of permanent institutions that contradict this: the health service, education, unemployment and poverty. Public opinion can no longer be so easily managed, but Keith Middlemas argued this with more historical and institutional depth in his *Politics of Industrial Society* two years ago – a book not mentioned by Beer, just as Townsend is oddly ignored.

Yes, Britain is divided against itself, but by the policies of political leaders and by economic failure. If political science has any relevance or coherence, these have to be discussed. Why should the Hayekians and the Marxists alone develop a political economy approach? But Beer ends by offering us the weird hope that the Social Democrats stand in the radical Cromwellian tradition of the English Civil War (stealing all poor Michael's clothes). What began as a second great book on the character of British politics sadly degenerates into a Social Democratic tract. I hope that Beer will simply write a new edition of *Modern British Politics* after the 1984 election has removed all short-term hopes. □

Britain Against Itself: The Political Contradictions of Collectivism by SAMUEL H. BEER *Faber* £9.50.

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SOCIETY: Anne Smith

A sort of limbo

Working-Class Childhood by JEREMY SEABROOK *Gollancz* £10.95 and £4.95
Her People by KATHLEEN DAYUS *Virago* £4.50

Subtitled 'An Oral History', Jeremy Seabrook's new book offers an interpretation of a series of recollections of working-class childhood, spanning the last hundred years and covering the whole spectrum from the 'respectable' working class to the submerged tenth. The memories are presented in a way that is coherent and fascinating – shilling lives, so to speak; Mr Seabrook's interpretation and commentary come as sheer revelation. *Working-Class Childhood* is one of those rare books that have you smacking your brow and yelling, 'Of course! Why the hell didn't I see it?' It is also one of those books which, when you start to quote from it, you don't know where to stop, but the kernel of Mr Seabrook's argument is contained in these passages:

> In many ways, the dominant model within the *contemporary working class is shaped out of* elements of the older 'rough' way of living: what were regarded by a majority as improvidence, irresponsibility, selfishness, living in the present, an absence of moral values, have all been transformed, if not into virtues, at least into general norms; whereas the older prevailing way of life – with its endurance and frugality, self-denial and deferring of joys and pleasures until they disappear – become a deterrent, the worst thing that can happen to you, a sign of failure. These things have been devalued, bacause the possibility of human resources as a substitute for money would severely interfere with the dynamic of the economy, which is all about selling things to those who were recently poor. In this way, what look like profound changes in society are really only slight shifts of emphasis, the conjunction of already existing aspects of the culture, which create an illusion of radical change in a system that is constant in that it always takes from the working class.
>
> We are deeply aware of the childhood of our parents, denied and subordinated for the sake of the labour they were destined to become; and we have lived to see our own children delivered into a corrupting plenty, which has as its end, not the fulfilment of human needs, but that which corrodes identity, extinguishes purpose and substitutes fantasy for achievement.
>
> Traditional social determinants have decayed – social function, value; and the young talk of journeys, of finding a self not defined by society. In doing so, they are reduced and denuded to the most basic needs and instincts, which they are invited to express only through what can be bought. It involves a paring away, not only of traditional work skills and ablities – it's hard to say how great a loss this is – but also of all the resource and humanity with which people confronted adversity in these recently poor towns and cities. All that is left is a bare bundle of appetites and instincts, delivered to the market-place.

I know he's right. Like most intellectuals whose roots and heart are in the working class, like Mr Seabrook himself, I inhabit a sort of limbo, because the working class I knew does not seem to exist any longer. Its values have disappeared and, retaining them, I find nowhere to apply them in the bourgeois Bohemia of professional life. The 'decency' I had hammered into me as a child, the absence of the cash nexus or of calculation of any kind between neighbours (my father would sweep everyone's chimneys when he swept ours, the man next door would drive me to hospital in his coverted hearse, everyone only too pleased to be seen to have something to contribute to the independent spirit of the whole), the qualities that way of life inculcated emerge in me now as 'naivety'. It is naive in the arts and the professions to expect what I grew up believing were the basic social virtues: decency, generosity, kindness. But having entered that world, and come rapidly to detest it, I discover that meantime my roots have been destroyed. It's as if we'd shoved all the best stuff in a remote attic and chosen to live with the junk.

Bernard Crick is quoted on the sleeve of *Working-Class Childhood* as praising 'the rare quality of moral dignity' in Mr Seabrook's earlier book, *What Went Wrong?* I can only endorse and re-emphasise this with regard to his latest book, and add to it that Seabrook also possesses other, equally rare and complementary qualities: honesty, profundity, sincerity, and a wry sense of humour; though as I read *Working-Class Childhood* the wish grew that Seabrook's commentary might be translated into simpler language, so that his book could reach the people it discusses. The task would not be overwhelmingly difficult, and the funny, sad, horrifying and idyllic memories it contains are in themselves enough to guarantee its instant popularity. I know dozens of working-class people who would be as stunned and politicised by its revelations as I have been.

Kathleen Dayus's story of her childhood in the slums of Birmingham fits in perfectly with the sort of stories Mr Seabrook's people have to tell, but in great and often hilarious detail. 'Hilarious' may be an odd word to use for what is essentially a heart-rending tale of extreme poverty, but the instinct for survival depends for its sucess so much of the time on a sense of humour. The chapter entitled 'Mum Decides to Take Us Hop-picking', with its tale of a bevy of benighted Brummies going to live on a farm, is savagely funny. The chapter on 'Free Samples', when the children nicked Ex-Lax (chocolate laxative) samples off the doorsteps, not knowing what they were, is funny too. But all through the book there is a nightmarish sense of the horror of it all that no amount of humour can expunge.

If I hadn't read *Working-Class Childhood* in tandem with Kathleen Dayus's book, I'd be wondering why it should produce such feelings of nostalgia, but Jeremy Seabrook explains it: the nostalgia is not for deprivation, but for a period when it was still possible to feel that life had a purpose, and that one could be immediately useful to someone other than oneself. □

Craig Raine

Inca

Inca. Since the past is past,
now there is only imagination.
In the walled garden,
I am arm in arm
with another life,

the luminous deckchair
poised like a cricket
in stifling moonlight.
The sun dial registers shadow,
made faint by the house lights.

And the swans display
their dripping beaks for us,
but your lips are parted:
to kiss, or to speak.
I cannot tell. Inca.

Now, there is only this:
the lawn sprinkler's dervish,
a rosewood metronome
whose key was lost,
and other aptly chosen detail.

Inca. We will watch the pigeons
pass from grey to white,
suddenly twitched,
like a Venetian blind
in the other bedroom.

There, where the child sleeps. Inca.
I am staring at nothing,
teeth on my pen.
The water-butt juggles
with raindrops. Inca.

Tears come to your eyes
as you read the blank paper
for what it can tell you.
Now, there is only this:
the long, unwritten poem

which almost celebrates
a daughter's parsnip heels
and her pale, perfect nipples
like scars left by leaves.
Inca. How her nightdress rides up.

How she comes, a serious face,
from every corner of the garden,
cupping a secret
she wants me to see,
as if she had somehow

invented the wheel. O Inca.

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LITERATURE: Jeremy Lewis

All-round gaucho

Selected Writings of R. B. Cunninghame Graham ed. CEDRIC WATTS *Associated University Presses* £13.50

In a highly specialised age, the unabashed amateur prepared to try his hand at anything almost invariably arouses suspicion and indignation; while the rise of Eng. Lit. as an academic subject, with its mania for pigeon holes and its sadly narrow definition of its subject matter, has meant that much excellent writing is unduly neglected simply because it can't be conveniently categorised. As Cedric Watts points out in the pleasingly enthusiastic essays that introduce the various sections of his all-too-brief anthology, Cunninghame Graham has suffered badly, both as an admirable and engaging public figure and as an attractive, ambitious and extremely productive writer, from his obstinate refusal to choose his last and stick to it.

Most of us probably associate Cunninghame Graham with gaucho-like ramblings in Central and South America (often confusing him with W. H. Hudson in the process), Scottish nationalism (a late enthusiasm), and his part in the 'Bloody Sunday' disturbances in Trafalgar Square of November 1887 (which led to a short stint in Pentonville that merely served to inflame his campaigning enthusiasm for the lot of the dockers, the eight-hour week, the nationalisation of mining and industry, the plight of women, free education, Irish Home Rule and the host of other causes that roused his eloquent indignation). All that is only part of the story: born in 1852, the Perthshire landowner employed the balance of his 84 years, after leaving Harrow, as – to quote Dr Watts's own listing – 'cattle-rancher and horse-dealer, swordfencer, Liberal MP, pioneer Socialist, demagogue, convict, prospector for gold, begetter of Sergius Saranoff in Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, political columnist, essayist . . . and expert with the lasso', as well as being hailed as the 'uncrowned King of Scotland'.

When Graham made his maiden speech in the Commons in 1887, *Vanity Fair* remarked that although he looked 'something between Grosvenor Gallery aesthete and waiter in Swiss café', he 'drawled out some deuced smart things . . . House kept in continuous roar for more than half an hour. Fogeys and fossils eye him askance, and whisper that he ought to be "put down".' Dr Watts quotes the speech in full, and magnificent stuff it is too, as it moves from angry moral indignation about a heartless government that 'has not one word to bridge over the awful chasm existing between the poor and the rich; not one word of kindly sympathy for the sufferers from the present commercial and agricultural depression – nothing but platitudes' to lethal sarcasm at the expense of Irish landlordism: 'So far from turning them out on a bleak, cold winter's night, the landlord has provided his dependents with a fire to warm their hands; only, through a pardonable inadvertance, it is their houses that furnish the blaze.'

The same somewhat old-fashioned combination of moral fervour, descriptive energy and radical sympathy for the underdog that Graham brought to, say, the wretched nail-and chain-makers of Cradley Heath can be found in his stories, several of which are included here. Perhaps the most vivid of these, 'A Hegira', deals with the remorseless hunting down of some Indian prisoners who've escaped from jail – and at the same time manages to evoke and describe great swathes of the Mexican countryside with an almost painterly delicacy and exactitude. □

Manchester University Press have asked us to point out that Michael Gallagher's *The Irish Labour Party in Transition*, listed in the Autumn Books number of the *NS* (24 September), will be published in Britain by Manchester University Press and not, as stated, by Gill & Macmillan (Dublin).

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Shorter reviews

Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television ed. COLIN MCARTHUR *BFI* £3.25

Although the seven contributors to *Scotch Reels* (reels of film – get it?) are ideologically on the side of the angels, they are far from being on the side of that cherub discovered playing the bagpipes in the Thistle Chapel of St Giles. They have taken as terribly against Tartanry (ye bonnie bankmanship) as they have against the Kailyard (braw, bricht, moonlicht nichts).

They identify Glasgow, rather than Tannochbrae or the braes of Balquidder, as the 'real' Scotland, and deplore the failure of both cinema and television to depict that reality. Whether their conclusions shed much new licht on why is another matter. They argue that the 'magic of the imagination should be directed towards the amelioration of social ills' and that progress in art, as in other forms of human endeavour, involves subversion. For those of us who still believe in art for art's, rather than the Arts Council's, sake and who recoil from expressions such as 'collective socio-aesthetic statements', this is all very alarming. As is their recommendation of large-scale public and private sponsorship of such cultural activities as find favour with well-meaning but self-elected and sterile élites.

No less alarming is their apparent misapprehension about what constitutes our national identity. To deride Ally Macleod for both the matter and the manner of his pronouncement that 'Scotland is the best wee nation that God ever put breath in' is to ignore the fact that it is what most of us do believe. With all our capacity for tenderness we have an ineradicable streak of both vulgarity and sentimentality.

There is of course something very much the matter with Glasgow. That reels of solemn documentaries going round and round in empty cinemas will ameliorate the lot of that unfair city is, however, to expect too much from us Scotsmen who actually like shortbread tins decorated with optimistic pictures of a sober Prince Charming.

Bruce Hepburn

The Third Age of Broadcasting ed. BRIAN WENSHAM *Faber* £2.95

The discussion about future television expansion to be provided by cable and satellite – which, after the eras of sound radio and controlled television, will usher in what Brian Wenham (Controller, BBC-2) has dubbed the Third Age of Broadcasting – is getting out of proportion. Those who believe that cable will bring unimaginable bounty; and those who hold, as Labour Solidarity does of the Militant tendency, that it is a pestilential nuisance which corrupts from within, are proclaiming their cases increasingly hysterically.

This is not entirely their fault. Despite the demotic character of television – which makes it, uniquely, the one subject on which every citizen might hold an opinion – the government is doing all it can to stifle public debate. Thus, although the essays here are similarly characterised by exaggerated hopes/fears, the book is to be welcomed for trying to stimulate discussion and allowing a variety of opinions to be aired. (Unlike the BBC it does not suffer from a consensus standpoint.)

Contributors, most of whom are senior television executives, explain the great advances that cable could bring in their own special fields – in local and access television, in arts and education programming, for instance. True, the potential is mind-boggling – but there's an over-all glibness about how it will all actually be achieved. Just because something is technologically feasible does not mean that it is socially desirable, or even commercially attractive; Concorde proved that. It also needs to be explained how something as dazzlingly futuristic as cable is going to flourish within an economy that's regressed to the 1930s. And, even if cable were to create employment, won't jobs correspondingly be lost elsewhere – in the newspaper and publishing industries, for example? A socio-economic perspective would have been useful.

The most cautionary tale here is from Robert MacNeil, who examines the US experience of cable, which is far more sobering than the UK cable industry would readily admit. His is one of the valuable essays. There are others from David Puttnam, on the convergence of film and TV and the adjustments that will need to be made in each profession; Paul Bonner, on the history of access TV; and Melvyn Bragg, on TV and the arts.

Wenham does admit in his introduction that 'the BBC and ITV are too easily given to pessimism', and I think that's true. The BBC will not lose the Cup Final, or Wimbledon; but neither will Bragg get his full range of increased arts options, much less Bonner his 'individual's free right of access to a video source'. Not this century, anyway.

Bob Woffinden

The Murders of the Black Museum: 1870-1970 by GORDON HONEYCOMBE *Hutchinson* £5.95

Abolishing the death penalty did more than stop murderers being hanged. It destroyed their status as stars of rather squalid dramas. Only very, very rarely – for a Yorkshire Ripper, or the Krays, or the killers of the vanished Mrs McKay – do newspapers now devote column after column to the minutiae of cross-examination or a judge's summing-up. Which is a pity, for a murder trial not only constitutes a kind of real-life serial story but it presents human behaviour in an extreme situation.

Gordon Honeycombe's collection of 53 murders is lavishly illustrated. Yet the value of the book lies not only in allowing us to see the facsimile of a letter written by Mrs Dyer, the notorious Baby Farmer, but in the way the cases have been chosen to reflect changing social circumstances. 'Baby farming', for example, arose from the late Victorian sense of shame about illegitimacy. Chaotic wartime conditions in Britain in 1944 provided a background for the pathetic journeyings – in stolen cars and US Army trucks – of Betty Jones, a strip-tease dancer from South Wales, and a GI paratrooper, who eventually shot a taxi-driver ('the man with the cleft chin') alongside the Chiswick roundabout.

Very little in fiction can equal the superhuman small-mindedness of the Seddons, who poisoned their lodger in 1911. They come across like malignant Pooters, Mr Seddon creating a scene at a music-hall after being given change for a florin instead of half-a-crown, Mrs Seddon ticking off her sister-in-law ('Let us show a little respect') for not lowering the blinds after the victim's death. Not that the victim invites much sympathy: she was, Honeycombe writes, 'parsimonious, squalid, ignorant, asthmatic, self-indulgent, deaf and drank gin'. The trial concluded with Mr Seddon trying to suborn the judge, a fellow Mason. And just before being hanged at Pentonville he heard that his house had been sold for next to nothing. 'That's finished it!' he exclaimed.

Charles Fox

The Fenians in England, 1865-1872 by PATRICK QUINLIVAN and PAUL ROSE *Calder* £10.95

'Fenian' is one of those words whose meaning changes according to the user. Used in strictly historical context it refers to an Irish nationalist conspiracy of truly world-wide dimensions. Their refined sense of the spectacular produced the raid on Chester Castle, the Manchester and Clerkenwell attacks, and even an attempt to invade Canada from the United States.

Despite this theatricality the Fenians deserved to be taken seriously. Their desperation was fuelled by the terrible experience of the Irish Famine, which they regarded (with some justification) as a deliberate attempt at genocide by the British. Many were trained and battle-hardened soldiers, thanks to the American Civil War and remarkably successful infiltration of the British Army. There was always the distinct possibility that they might provoke a trans-Atlantic war. Their immediate failure was partly due to a critical vulnerability to informers, but it also raises questions of more direct interest to present-day republican socialists.

For the Fenians were both 'nationalist' and 'terrorist'. According to socialist orthodoxy, their nationalism was a false ideology and their reliance on terroristic methods hindered the growth of an Irish mass-movement of opposition to British rule. Hence, in theory, their failure.

Quinlivan and Rose argue convincingly that such an interpretation takes no account of the uniqueness of the Irish nationalist situation, or of the genuine mass support which Fenianism enjoyed. They speculate that the more general failure is that of British socialists in their inadequate understanding of Irish nationalism. This book will contribute to such an understanding, even if belatedly.

Frank Kane

A Half of Two Lives: A Personal Memoir by ALISON WALEY *Weidenfeld* £10.95

A Half of Two Lives is Alison Grant Robinson's memoir of her years spent intermittently with Arthur Waley, the translator of Chinese poetry. It might have been called *A Third of Three Lives* since the first Mrs Waley, Beryl de Zoete, ravaged by the incurable Huntington's Chorea, necessarily occupies much space in this romance of subterfuge and deception, of secret Bloomsbury rendezvous 'behind the School of Oriental Studies', and in 50 Gordon Square, Clive Bell's old flat.

Who would have thought it? Arthur was such a nice, quiet, scholarly man. Why has there been no whisper of this before? Not even Ivy Compton-Burnett, after so many years of knowing Dr Waley, was aware of this philandering infatuation.

Perhaps Alison's account is a bit of a tall story. She certainly assumes a role for herself when fresh from New Zealand which seems a little more important than others can recall. Alison claims to have rubbed shoulders with most of the Bloomsbury groupers, to have been seated at the right hand of Edith Sitwell, and on 'Tom' terms with Eliot. At least she did not know Katherine Mansfield, although 'we went to the same Diocesan School.'

These are the surprising confessions of a scholar's mistress who, in the end, became the second Mrs Waley for just a month and a day. They now make it necessary, in view of many raised eye-brows, to have a proper, definitive biography of the great scholar.

Brian Martin

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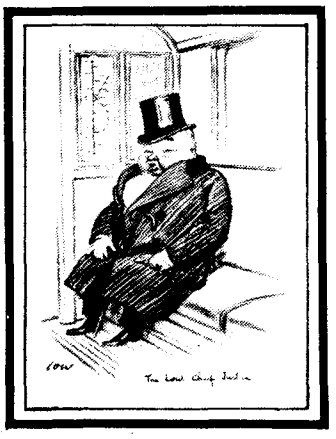

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FICTION: Marion Glastonbury

Occupational hazards

Mantissa by JOHN FOWLES *Cape* £6.95
The London Embassy by PAUL THEROUX *Hamish Hamilton* £7.95

'Am I being a coward by writing inside the old tradition? Am I being panicked into avant-gardism?' Doubts about his future in narrative form troubled John Fowles fifteen years ago, as he drafted *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. He had fallen in love, he says, with a haunting mythopeic image, a female figure of unknown origin, looking out to sea and silently demanding to be caressed into life.

Inspiration, like sexual arousal, proves alarmingly resistant to conscious control. The mystery of these involuntary processes poses a challenge to an introspective stylist who has studied the Nouveau Roman and deconstructionist aesthetics, and now finds himself enshrined in the canon of Contemporary Literature, his books prescribed as set texts on academic courses, his every utterance grist to a thriving commercial mill.

Mantissa marks a deliberate step in a post-modernist direction: an attempt to make comedy from the existential problems, paradoxes and frustrations of the novelist's craft: 'Of course the whole genre is in a mess.' Reviewers don't read; critics despise humour; authors count for less than parasitic pedants; internationally esteemed artists peddle a hypocritical despair.

The individual creator, far from being in charge of 'the God-game', is at the mercy of his own imagination, passive, bed-ridden, locked in solitude and devoid of identity, until his fantasies take shape and reach out to him. This they do in the predictable guise of a naked nymph, a maenad in black leather, a Japanese geisha, a stern sex-therapist, and a roguish West Indian nurse (teasingly described by a rival as a golliwog).

The encounters take place in a hospital room with grey, quilted upholstery which symbolizes the hero's brain but reminds him of schoolgirls' nipples. There are echoes of the Chalet School, too, in the dialogue: 'That's a beastly thing to say . . . The game's up, my girl. You've played it once too often.' Banter and badinage are interspersed with quotations from Descartes, Marivaux and Lemprière, demonstrating the Muse's pedigree and the author's erudition. Picasso's 'Sculptor and Kneeling Model' appear on the dust-jacket, indicating high seriousness. The message of these impressive credentials is clear: this pubis is *classical*; these rape-jokes have *class*.

In the post-Updike era, novelists of repute are readily persuaded to try their hand at erotica. (Why? as proof of potency? of professionalism? or as a favour to their publishers?) Whatever prompted Fowles to undertake *Mantissa* – the title means 'an addition of comparatively small importance to a literary effort or discourse' (*OED*) – he seems to hold others responsible for the weariness it induces. 'How sick one gets of writing – and even sicker of being forced to publish it.' This at least sounds heartfelt. Whimsical denunciations of the eternal feminine, capricious, protean, elusive, stem from a genuine grudge against the readers who have forced him into this massage parlour.

The blurb appeals confidently to 'those who want to discover what goes on in the mind of John Fowles', while the cover-photograph presents him, framed by laurel and bay, looking understandably sheepish. This latest experiment will embarrass his admirers and appal his friends.

Happily at ease with old-fashioned first-person narration, Paul Theroux has promoted the amiable Spencer Savage, formerly American consul in Malaysia, to the post of Political Officer in **The London Embassy**. He explores the city, 'built to enclose secrets', buys a flat, becomes a connoisseur of bus-routes and weather. In his job, as a cleverly undiplomatic diplomat, he endures the slog of official entertaining, emulates the swagger of successful management, notes the dismay of Soviet emigrés on reaching their goal. In private, he experiences the gaffes and snubs and misunderstandings that arise among strangers divided by a common language.

The most accomplished raconteur may, on occasion, be reproached for his fluency. Perhaps an anecdote may be too neatly turned; his specimens too obviously primed with local colour and social significance. Some are repro-models of quaint old English archetypes: the Cockney landlady, the impoverished aristocrat, the homosexual antique dealers.

But there is nothing contrived about his compelling scenes of domestic intimacy, and these generally involve native Americans. An expatriate couple confide, each in turn, their fears for their respective partner's sanity. Self-pitying husbands show their marital scars, like veterans of a combat zone from which divorcés have been invalided out. Teenage sons display ad nauseam the character-forming influence of English school-fees, while their parents repeat proud boasts and altruistic theories to keep their spirits up. □

BIOGRAPHY: Laurence Lerner

The other crowd

Group Portrait by NICHOLAS DELBANCO *Faber* £8.95

In Kent and East Sussex around 1900 lived a quintet of literary neighbours and friends as distinguished as the more famous Bloomsbury group: Conrad, James, Stephen Crane, Ford Madox Ford and H. G. Wells. In this slight but attractive book, Nicholas Delbanco tells their story. Crane was the *enfant terrible* of the group, a whole generation younger than James and Conrad but far more famous (and more disreputable). What a nostalgic charm there is in reading that James, getting the worst of an argument, asked Crane his age: ' "Twenty-seven" said Stephen. "Humph", said Mr James, "prattling babe!" '

The two most important relationships in the group were those of Conrad and Ford, who collaborated, and James and Wells, who quarrelled. The products of the Conrad/Ford collaboration are worth little, but Mr Delbanco claims that they had a profound influence on each other, that fed into their finest work: Ford, he believes, helped Conrad to realise the surface of his texts, and to acquire the care and artistry he needed to make the most of his marvellous invention. It is unprovable, of course, but there is no doubt of their closeness, and of the fact that it immediately preceded Conrad's great creative period.

Indeed, it seems that Ford wrote a section of *Nostromo*, the interview between Antonia Avellanos and Decoud in Part II chapter 5 – which I have just reread, and admired, and found to be true Conrad! Conrad was suffering from 'gout and nervous depression', and since the novel was being serialised, Ford kept things going, choosing to do a scene that would not require the introduction of any new material; yet Mr Delbanco claims, with some plausibility, that by showing Decoud in love more fully, perhaps, than Conrad would have done, Ford humanised him and enriched the novel.

As for James and Wells, their quarrel, resulting from Wells's lampoon *Boon*, is now well known (though *Boon* remains unobtainable). It has become orthodox to see James as the dignified victim and Wells as a boor and a Philistine, and certainly his attempt to excuse himself by calling the book 'just a waste-paper basket' was rejected with understandable anger by James; but behind the quarrel lies a serious difference between two equally defensible conceptions of the novel. Wells had come to see the novel as 'an instrument for the amelioration of the people's lot', and his defence of this view, which Mr Delbanco quotes at length, is impressively intelligent, detaching itself firmly from mere crude didacticism; just as his descriptions of James's fiction, though the dedicated Jamesian will resent them, are both shrewd and witty.

To give a further dimension to the controversy, Mr Delbanco adds two illuminating documents: a fascinating letter from Wells to Joyce, refusing to declare support for *Finnegans Wake* because 'You have turned your back on common men, on their elementary needs and their restricted time and intelligence'; and a wonderfully characteristic comment by Conrad: 'The difference between us is fundamental. You don't care for humanity but think they are to be improved. I love humanity, but know they are not.' All in all, it seems to me one of the crucial literary disagreements of the century. □

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ART: John Spurling

Sex 'n' violence

Painting in Naples 1606-1705 *RA until 12 December, then National Gallery, Washington and Grand Palais, Paris.*

The King grasps his beard with one hand and the tablecloth with the other; the princess, dressed in a flamboyant red ballgown, lifts the cover of her dish to show a severed head; the Queen pokes delicately at the late preacher's tongue with a fork; the family nanny, standing behind the Queen, shakes her head at Salome with a fond smile. Rubens's *Feast of Herod* was last lent to an exhibition, also at the RA, in 1893. It belongs now to the National Gallery of Scotland, but it once belonged to the Paul Getty of 17th-century Naples, a Flemish merchant called Caspar Roomer who owned some 1500 paintings. The arrival of the *Feast of Herod* in Naples in about 1640 caused a sensation and affected a whole generation of Neapolitan artists. It is a sensation still and would be worth the entrance fee if there were nothing else in the RA. Actually there is so much else that it is like paying to see a single film and being admitted to a festival. These baroque masterpieces are so packed with action and emotion that each scene is really the distillation of a complete narrative, though a thorough study of the outstanding catalogue (RA and Weidenfeld, £5.90) is an essential preliminary.

The nearest to a household name, apart from Rubens's, is Caravaggio's, and his outstanding contribution to the history of art as well as to the Counter-Reformation was to insist that if Christ was flogged or St Ursula shot in the breast it happened right in front of you to a particular human body. Caravaggio is famous, of course, for his violent lighting effects, the way his figures loom out of their surrounding darkness, but what makes him a master, particularly in the late works shown here, is the excruciating tension he holds between the figures, so that the longer you look, the less it can be resolved. The three thugs have hardly started on Christ yet; the King of the Huns has only just released the arrow at point-blank range into St Ursula, the pain is to come; the squirming St Peter is still in the act of denial and the maidservant still whispering to the soldier's deeply-shadowed profile, but the slow poison of guilt and self-reproach will not begin to work until the cock crows.

Although there are radical changes of style and influence throughout this exhibition, so that by the end of it there are clear signs of the 18th century charm and superficiality to come, Caravaggio's technique of large-scale dramatic close-up is more or less standard. Even the still-lifes of flowers, fruit or fish – eruptions of colour and momentary ripeness against black backgrounds – are somehow sinister and aggressive, perhaps because of their association with the intensely observed naturalistic detail which distinguishes nearly every painting here. In Ribera's *Apollo and Marsyas* the screaming face of the upside-down satyr is placed at the very bottom of the canvas, his teeth and tongue suggesting one of the bursting pomegranates in the same position in a still-life. At top right Apollo's little fruit-knife, slightly stained, is stuck into the tree to which Marsyas is bound, while the god languidly strokes what seems to be a deep red wound in the tree but must in fact be Marsyas' left foot from which he is beginning to peel away the skin. Apollo himself, cool, absorbed, angelic, in a flying cyclamen cloak and a great leafy head-dress, looks down like a lover into his victim's face.

In Stanzione's *Massacre of the Innocents* the still-life element, alone on the faded pink and blue tiles in the foreground, is a child's severed hand. Nearby, Artemisia Gentileschi's Judith, sleeves hitched up, arms braced, body pulled back like a hostess performing a last minute carve-up in the kitchen and not wanting to stain her magnificent blue dress, has the sword halfway through Holofernes' neck, while the cabbage-like head twists sideways and back towards the spectator.

The horror is inescapable, but is it gratuitous? These are after all the stories we often tell ourselves, whether in the name of religion, entertainment or keeping up with the news. The artists who worked in Naples in the 17th century merely imagined them more realistically and with greater sensuality and psychological depth than usual. Their own internecine squabbles (Ribera and his friends made a practice of intimidating visiting artists) and personal traumas (Caravaggio was a manslaughterer, Gentileschi the victim of a rape), the squalor and corruption of their city, the greed and cruelty of their ecclesiastical and Spanish overlords, the populist revolt of 1647, the plague which halved the population in 1656, the terrible earthquake of 1688, must all have contributed to the climate these pictures inhabit.

No one can accuse them of not being circumstantially true; what we might wish to deny them is any more general truth, outside their time and style. We might like to dismiss them as baroque, operatic, melodramatic. On the contrary, what they lack is the let-out, the better world beyond, the happy ending; presumably the priests could be trusted to take care of that side of things. Christ in despair, in Caracciolo's *Agony in the Garden*, is comforted by an angel in the shape of a robust, thoroughly human boy. The one head bent over the other and the huge wings behind make it clear that his mission is successful. It is equally clear, if one studies those two wonderfully contrasted faces, that the comfort comes from ignorance of the world and the agony from knowledge of it. □

Among this week's contributors:

BERNARD CRICK is Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, London, and the author of *George Orwell: A Life*.

ANNE SMITH, founder-editor of *The Literary Review*, is writing a book on D. H. Lawrence and Women.

JEREMY LEWIS is a director of Chatto & Windus.

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale

All in the same boat

Way Upstream by ALAN AYCKBOURN **Lyttelton**
Andy Capp by ALAN PRICE and TREVOR PEACOCK *Aldwych*
Mass Appeal by BILL C. DAVIS *Lyric, Hammersmith*

The old theatrical rule should clearly be amended. Never act with animals, children, or anything liquid and large, like the Norfolk Broads. Still, the National Theatre, having twice postponed the opening of **Way Upstream,** managed on Monday successfully to hold its water, leaving me, for one, in seven or eight minds about the result. One thing, however, I did *not* think, though I had expected to do so; and that was that all the fuss and expense of bringing on stage a real boat, and an overblown puddle for it to meander around, was mere waste and silliness. It has the unlooked-for but necessary effect of emphasising the characters' isolation from the world of policemen and helpful passers-by, even though that must presumably be only a short way from the river up which they're chugging. It gives a distinctive physical milieu, an excuse for closeting unlikely characters claustrophobically close to each other, some sense of peril, and, of course, opportunities for laughter.

Many of these opportunities Ayckbourn does not take. His expertise these days is such that he could set a seamlessly comic play in the torpedo tubes of a submarine on alternate Ash Wednesdays; and he disdains obvious, predictable farce. For instance, no-one falls in to the drink. The funniest scene, an incompetent attempt to moor the craft while others hoot angrily behind her, is amusing less for the physical business involved, more for its sly exploitation of character, notably a landlubber 'captain' desperately trying to sustain his nautical image while all around chaos proliferates. This podgy fellow, I should explain, is called Keith. He's a tinpot industrialist married to June, who combines personal idleness with sexual restlessness and despises him. Together with Alistair, his ineffectual business partner, and Alistair's timid but sensible wife Emma, they are muddling their way upstream from Hadforth Boatyard to Armageddon Bridge on what's 'going to be a great holiday'.

Such a prophecy in an Ayckbourn play is a sure sign of hubris: and quite soon punishment begins. June's complaints, her screeching rows with Keith, keep the others awake at night, while reminding them of the flatness of their own relationship. Keith becomes increasingly preoccupied with increasingly serious reports of trouble at t'mill. And until halfway through the evening and up the river it looks as if, for all the unwanted quacking of coot and tern, we're in familiar Ayckbourn territory: insensitivity, egoism, do-

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mineering arrogance, the glumness of middle-class marriage, the joylessness of bourgeois joys. But then on comes a smiling stranger, a drifter named Vince; and he proceeds to commandeer everything he can, from the boat to its skipper's wife. Discipline is imposed, violent penalties exacted. Helped now by a malicious local aristo called Fleur, Vince ditches Keith, maroons and attacks Alistair, tries to make Emma walk the plank, and subjects June to exotic sexual humiliations. The jolly roger replaces the red ensign, and on an English river.

Ayckbourn has said he wanted to write about evil, and his play suggests he's also trying to give it a socio-political dimension. Alistair and Emma, it seems, are the decent but unassertive moderates, beset by the threat of fascism (Vince), the spoiled rich (Fleur), capitalism (Keith), labour (a briefly glimpsed striker), and whatever generality the shiftless June represents. But they survive, to find new togetherness and strength on the other side of Armageddon Bridge (!), where they prepare for a crusading return to nasty reality, after the manner of the socialists of Priestley's *They Came to a City*: 'We reasonable people will have to go back and reason with them.' Now, Ayckbourn's long-held aim has been to deepen his work and our laughter. Does he succeed in this, or is his river-saga simply on over-important *Swallows and Amazons* an instance of a comic dramatist getting out of his depth, even sinking into a watery grave?

Well, I don't think the play altogether works, either on a personal or a supra-personal level. Alistair is the latest of a line of hyper-helpess Ayckbourn characters, but the degree of his passivity and the abruptness of his awakening from it are too great for belief. The play's politics seem to me callow and sketchy. Moreover, it's hard to take its evils too seriously, given their context of wry if bleakish comedy. And yet, even if the result isn't another *Lord of the Flies*, let alone a new *Heart of Darkness*, it's surely inspiring to find our leading comic dramatist insisting on setting improbable new challenges for himself. Besides, I suspect that the play would work a lot better were more tension, more danger, more harshness somehow to be injected into its confrontations. For this Ayckbourn himself must, however, be blamed, since he's his own director; he, and perhaps Jim Norton, whose Alistair should be much more unsettle and uneasy beneath his blankly compliant facade.

Still, there's an amusingly puffed-up Keith from Tony Haygarth; and Susan Fleetwood is excellent, indeed superb, as June, the slovenly sexpot who ends up gorged and vomiting all over the boat. And for the week's other offerings, mega-brevity. **Andy Capp:** anecdotal, larky, fun, if in need of a tighter plot; Val McLane a splendidly robust Flo, Tom Courtenay a not-unsympathetic (yet not sentimentalised) MCP. **Mass Appeal:** trite American import about a bland priest and the uplift given him by an unruly deacon; played by Rupert Everett and Gordon Jackson as an assault by a flailing electric toothbrush on a pair of bleached dentures. And the RSC's *Witch of Edmonton* will have to wait until next week. □

FILMS: John Coleman

When a Spade was a Spade

Hammett (AA) *Lumière Cinema, St Martin's Lane*
The Scarecrow (AA) *ABCs Bayswater and Fulham Road*

With every second pair of eyes in London currently TV-turned, enjoying pirated cassettes of *E.T.*, it requires unusual guts and gumption to take over a big cinema and make it work. All hail, then, to Pam and Andi Engel of Artificial Eye (they already run the Camden Plaza) for adopting that one-time Odeon, more recently known as The Lane, a stein's throw from the Salisbury. A new Bergman and a new Antonioni are promised attractions. Meanwhile, the newly christened Lumière opens with Wim Wenders' **Hammett,** some four interrupted years in the confecting and – one trusts – more than a nine days' wonder. Rehearsing the ups and downs of this decidedly rum enterprise would waste even more time, serving only to underline a point that is otherwise evident. Apart from the eccentric German, who made such a hash of Patricia Highsmith's already murky *The American Friend,* a lot of other people out at Coppola's Zoetrope Studios had a finger in the new goulash.

This is, in the outcome, an aggressively studio-bound movie, old-Hollywood-style, with much – too much – of the fun dependent on a recognition of the artificial wiles of a couple of production designers, Dean Tavoularis (*The Godfather, Apocalypse Now*) and Broadway's Eugene Lee. It is down their stylised mean streets and back alleys that Dashiell Hammett (Frederic Forrest) must go in 1928, doubling about San Francisco's Chinatown, now drunk, now creative, now both, but always shot from some damnably picturesque angle or other by either Philip Lathrop or Joseph Biroc. Sometimes you expect the whole shebang to turn into a musical – as wharf-mist drifts up, or whores drift down – and have done with it. Joe Gores' first-rate 1975 novel, which put a realistic Hammett through a snappily devious thriller plot, has not been 'adapted' by Thomas Pope: it has been trepanned. What remains is the barely pursuable pursuit of Crystal Ling (Lydia Lei), a teenage Chinese tart, spasmodically redeemed by scraps of dialogue from Ross Thomas and Dennis O'Flaherty. 'Shouldn't we call the police?' asks Hammett's girlfriend Kit (Marilu Henner), a little on edge. 'Shouldn't we do something *legal*?' 'Very nice,' says Hammett, surveying the howlingly ornate HQ of boss Fong (London restaurateur Michael Chow): 'simple, but elegant.'

Hammett is supposed to be shown dashing from taproom to typewriter, hazily converting the raw stuff into *Black Mask* fiction in many a montage shot involving clacking keys. There is in fact quite a good bracketing gag, ascribed to Coppola, which does this business once and for all. Elsewhere, the invitation is clearly to relish the woozy, nocturnal, nostalgic but elusive *texture* of what goes on, to get a charge from Roy Kinnear hopelessly dwarfed in a Sidney Greenstreet role, to nod benevolently as Elisha Cook taxis Forrest and Co. cheerily hither and yon. This wizened relic from the Huston *Maltese Falcon* is probably the biggest mistake of all. He's splendid, but he brings back memories of the real old artifice, when a Spade was a Spade, not a series of random gestures photographed through filters and glass floors. Last question, in the age of cinema authorism: just how much, when all the decor and dinky John Barry music is drained off, can properly be ascribed to the talents of Wim Wenders in this, his first movie-movie made in America?

An amiable New Zealand grown-up's voice intones over a quick scatter of images (black feather against wire, pretty girl's face, moon-glinting blade): 'The same night our fowls were stolen, Daphne Moran had her throat cut'. The only surprise is that the voice failed to preface this announcement with 'Evenin', all'. The speaker goes on cropping up helpfully throughout Sam Pillsbury's **The Scarecrow**, drawn from 'the classic New Zealand novel of Mystery, Mirth and Murder by Ronald Hugh Morrieson' if the credits are to be believed. He is Ned, recounting the arrival in a small town in the early Fifties of an unshaven, prestidigitating old rapist Hubert (John Carradine) and the fellow's effect on his boyhood and his burgeoning sister's girlhood. Two sexual murders occur, but the local idiots never suspect yellow-fanged Hubert with his appalling manners and forthright kinkiness. A young Australian actress, Tracy Mann, is appealing. □

TELEVISION: William Boyd

Spoof sleuth

THE opening credits of **The Hound of the Baskervilles** (BBC-1) are rolled up over an animated landscape of the Grimpen moor. Grey clouds boil, the wind whistles, it all looks, in its cartoon way, suitably doomladen. It's unusual – not to say expensive – to supply this sort of decorative preamble to the early Evening Sunday serial slot, so one is reasonably justified in wondering what it's all about.

At first I thought it might be way of alerting us to some facet of Tom Baker's performance as Holmes; that we were going to get a two-dimensional caricature or something of that order, but my initial reactions to the obligatory observational banter between the two sleuths were that this was all extremely orthodox. All the vital accoutrements were there of course, but there was nothing in Baker's manner to suggest that we were likely to get anything particularly out of the ordinary: a slightly more energetic Holmes perhaps, marginally more wired-up, possibly a hint of the neurotic-compulsive?

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Not that a new interpretation of Holmes isn't overdue. It's high time we had a breaking of the mould, especially when you consider the man's obsessions: the various addictions, his fads, his all-night binges on the violin. Holmes, let's be frank, is pretty *weird*. Baker, with his wide-eyed, somewhat dodgy stare, is in many respects the right man for the job, but I doubt that we're likely to get anything really radical. Everything else in episode one – including a hyper-stolid Terence Rigby as Watson – aligned itself comfortably with the norm and it was entertaining enough. So what's the point of the title sequence? Perhaps it's just there to suggest a frame of mind to the viewer with which, or through which, he or she can approach the show. It's not to be taken that seriously, it seems to be saying; there's a hint of spoof, of old fashioned 'gothick' about the enterprise. We shall see.

It's certainly a useful attitude to entertain, however, and allows me to overcome what's turning into a potent irritation. I'm finding it increasingly difficult to surrender my disbelief to TV drama these days, especially to drama shot on video – as the vast majority of it is. By video I mean drama shot in a studio with video as opposed to film cameras. This difficulty is exacerbated when the video sequences are intercut with film. The trouble is that the film looks real, and video (with a few exceptions) looks incredibly artificial. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was no exception: film for the external scenes, video for the interiors. It's something to do with the actual quality of the video image: far too brightly lit, harsh divisions of light and shade, unreally sharp focus.

Video sequences, despite noble attempts by designers and property buyers to convince us we're in real rooms, seem only to highlight – no pun – their factitiousness. It's not so bad when there are no filmed episodes to compare the video-ed scenes with, but it's still becoming increasingly hard to ignore. Even *Coronation Street* (Granada), which seldom ventures out of doors, seems to be played beneath blazing arc lights. Nobody lives in that sort of dazzling glare. Check it out the next time you're watching.

Another title sequence designed to alert viewers to what follows is **There's a Lot of it About** (BBC-2). Spike Milligan hastily paints the title to a brick wall then some one slings a pot of black paint all over it. But what does one make of Milligan? I think you either love him or leave him. He either makes you laugh or he doesn't.

This particular show, now two episodes old, isn't helped by having our laughs cued by the usual helpless studio audience. Milligan's style on these shows is a sort of free-associating surrealism with running gags and in-jokes thrown in. It's not difficult to sit stony-faced for ten minutes at a stretch. But it's worth persevering, as the frantic lucky-dip approach usually comes up with something in the end.

The great strength about Milligan is that his heart is in the right place and he doesn't give a damn for what anyone thinks. Last week we had Denis Thatcher threatening to commit suicide by leaping from the roof of Harrods. Milligan gives offence without being meretricious. Very difficult to do. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2740 **Set by Mr Chubby**

You may know P. G. Wodehouse's definitions of some phrases used on TV. *Fresh humour:* Old sure-fire jokes told by a young comedian. *Literate humour:* Old sure-fire jokes told by a young comedian with horn-rimmed spectacles. *Song stylist:* A singer. *Singing personality:* A lousy singer. More definitions, please, of terms used in showbiz, journalism, politics or sport. By 22 September.

No 2737 **Set by Robin Chase**

Myths and legends told in newspaper headlines.

Report **By Al Dente**

Well done. Wellingtons all round.

Midas
'GOLDEN HANDSHAKE WRECKED MY LIFE' – KING'S SHOCK CLAIM
KATE WALKER

Adam and Eve
NAKED COUPLE IN LOVE NEST PROBE
LANDLORD BANS FIG-LEAF LOVERS
'SHE LED ME ON' SAYS HUSBAND
JEMIMA BAIRD

Dido and Aeneas
'MY HEARTBREAK' – BY PRINCESS DI
TUG-OF-LOVE GIRL IN BLAZE TRAGEDY
LUCINDA POGORELICH

Icarus
LAKER RIVAL SOARS SKYWARD
PHEW! WHAT A SCORCHER!
FEATHERS FLY, SAYS CRASH WITNESS
HUMPHREY FORREST

Orpheus and Eurydice
ORPH AND EURY – 'SO HAPPY'
TRAGIC EURY IN SNAKE-BITE HORROR
HADES TRIP HITS SNAG
ORPHEUS – 'NO LOOKING BACK'
STAR 'TORN TO PEICES' BY CRAZED FANS
N. C. ANDREW

Odysseus and the Sirens
SEXY SONG GIRLS IN ISLAND DEATHS DRAMA
EAR-PLUGS FOR NO-SEX SAILORS
SAUCY SEA-DOG IN ON-DECK BONDAGE SCANDAL
CREW SAVED FROM SEX SNARE
MICHAEL ROSEN

Zeus and Leda
ZEUS TO FOLLOW LEDA
LEDA GETS THE BIRD
SWAN-UPPING NO GREAT SHAKES, SAYS LEDA
HERA DECLARES AGAINST SWAN MERGER
NO MORE SWANNING AROUND, SAYS ZEUS
M. K. CHEESEMAN

The Siege of Troy
AGGIE TELLS PRIAM – 'UP YOUR JUNO WHAT!'
THE FACE THAT LAUNCHED A TASK FORCE
THE PAPER THAT SUPPORTS OUR TROYS
PAIN IN THE ARGOS – GREEK FLEET SLAMS TROY BOYS
MARK LAWSON

Jesus of Nazareth
'MIRACLE BIRTH' FOR NO-SEX MUM
CHIPPIES SON BRAGS 'I AM GOD'
RELIGIOUS NUT NAILED ON BLASPHEMY CHARGE
ANDREW McCULLOCH

FIRST PERSON

Angela McRobbie

The right to walk

CAN women be *flâneurs?* How easy is it for a woman to stroll, or to undertake a systematic exploration of the city, as a form of leisure in itself? It's no problem for women to admire urban decay in the daytime, because strolling is so close to shopping as to be almost indistinguishable from it; but it's quite a different matter after dark. Simply being on the streets or even on public transport is enough to make women guilty. Guilty, that is, of offending the public face of private morality. Where young blacks doing the same are seen as a threat to public order, women are penalised for contributing unwittingly to *sexual* disorder; and the sexual curfew has extensive implications for both their work and their leisure.

It's well known, for example, that the 9.40 train from Euston to Birmingham has more than its fair share of wankers on board. These men escape all remonstration. They cannot be approached, and have described for them, the discomfort they are causing women travellers or the one unfortunate woman they have singled out for the privilege of their gaze. I hate being scrutinised by the man diagonally across from me who looks away when I try to glare meaningfully. But what I object to most is having my clothes policed for me in advance. One of the ways in which fashion semiotics operates is to equate certain forms of dress with 'asking for it'. Either we adhere to the non-sexual image of the 'matron' or the 'spinster' or we pay the price for demanding the right to take pleasure in dressing and looking.

Of course, discussions like this have long been a part of women's talk. They pre-date feminism by a long sweep; yet the right to full citizenship has been consistently denied. It remains very much a matter of devising personal strategies; and in many ways recent feminist concentration on rape and physical violence has meant that verbal and gestural assault have escaped attention. Fewer women now rely on husbands and boyfriends to 'collect' them, but the alternatives are often costly and time-consuming. A friend of mine, on her day-return to London from Birmingham, drives first to the National Exhibition Centre (12 miles from the city centre), where she can park her car only 50 yards from the platform. Then, no matter how late she travels back, her car is only a quick sprint away; and she avoids the problem of the multi-storey car-park, the late-night bus, or the expensive taxi.

But what about the majority of women

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who don't own cars; and what about girls? Here we are, wildly encouraging girls to be adventurous, to do things without needing the approval of men or boyfriends, and then in the next breath we take all this freedom away again. We are obliged to warn girls and young women of the dangers of being too free, of drinking too much, of losing track of the other girl after the disco. All of this struck me forcibly while I was doing research a few years ago. From my mixed group of adolescents it was immediately clear that the boys had a much more proprietorial attitude to the city than the girls. Not only were they free to wander without restriction but their interest in football meant that they travelled to other cities too. The girls, in contrast, were stuck at home. This was not only an index of their meagre material means but also a result of their being socialised into not wanting, and not looking for, whatever was not continually announced loud and clear to them as suitably feminine. Not for them the Bohemian or ethnic pleasures of the ragmarket. In almost 1930s style, these girls shopped for their clothes from catalogues and 'in the comfort of their homes'.

Another group of young women, mostly secretaries and shop assistants, were well aware of the difficulties precipitated by going to a disco 'unescorted'. First there were the restrictions on drink. A couple of vodkas soon gave way to water, an economy in the light of the need for a late-night taxi – and a safety precaution. Then there was the added nuisance of having to stay over with the girlfriend who shared the taxi . . . Not only ago my car broke down soon after midnight. I stopped a taxi, surprisingly because it displayed no for-hire sign and had no cab number visible inside. The driver told me what a rough area this was, and what was a nice girl like me . . .? Once started there was no stopping him. Yet another guardian of public morals, he deployed a moral concern which actually gave him scope to explore with some relish the field of fear, violence and sexual deviation. ('Mind you, girls around here know how to look after themselves.') As I got out and asked how much I owed, he was just embarking on a heavily SM account of how policewomen are trained to down a man. ('Different breed of girls these days.')

My taxi-driver stopped for classically 'chivalrous' reasons; but he wasn't willing to leave it at that. He wanted me to express gratitude and submission. A simple business transaction had become a patriarchal ritual. If I'd been a man he'd have kept his foot on the accelerator. But if I'd been a man I'd have been more than happy to enjoy the walk home, looking down over Birmingham, where the Mosque meets the high-rise blocks on each side of the inner-city motorway and the freshly laid artificial turf of the football pitch reflects green upwards to the sodium street-lights. Urban imagery has still to be wrestled away from the clutches of masculinity. □

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THE SWEETEST girl is out there. She's wanted by lonely, left-wing boy, 25. Sussex/South-East. Box 4889.

WEST END WIDOW wants to snare nice man (widower or div.) of good character, income, zest for living, and time to enjoy it. A bit more than middle-aged. Interests need not coincide, hers include nuclear disarmament, child welfare, theatre, music. A little dancing would be very nice. Box 4903.

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LISTINGS

Social/Cultural
Radical/Arts
Political

8-16 October

SEND DETAILS to:
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FRI 8 OCT

LONDON, SW2. Meeting, 'Civil Defence? Hard Luck!' 7.30 p.m. Lambeth Town Hall, Acre Lane. **01-677 9994.**

LONDON, WC1. Public Rally – El Salvador Anniversary FMLM. Speakers and film. LSE Old Theatre, Holborn, 7 p.m. **Tel: 01-359 2270.**

LONDON, N1. *Rally for Socialism.* Public meeting – speakers and discussion. Org. by SPGB. Adm. free. Info. tel: **Northwood (65) 24524.**

SAT 9 OCT

LONDON, W14. Patanjali Yoga Centre presents 'Time to be Still' by Peter Brent, at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4a Castletown Rd. Perfs. 6.30 p.m. & 8.45 p.m. £5 & £3 (students & u/w). **Tel: 01-203 0062.**

LONDON, NW2. Cast Variety at the Cricklewood Pub every Saturday, 8.30 p.m. £2 at door, £1 UB40/NUS card. **Tel: 01-457 3440/7469.**

DUDLEY CND. March & Rally. Assemble War Memorial, *Penshett High St, 10.30 a.m.*

SUN 10 OCT

CROYDON Warehouse, 62 Dingwall Rd. Pearce's Pop Up Art – poetry and prose in performance. Ian Puleston Davies – offbeat and noisy mime. Doors open 7.30 p.m. £1.50. Students/claimants £1. **Tel: 01-680 4060.**

LONDON, WC1. Forum, 'Campaign against the arms trade'. 3 p.m. Library, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Sw. 01-242 8032.

LIVERPOOL. Meeting, 'Democracy in the N.H.S.' Jean Robinson, David Blunkett, David Bird. 2-5 p.m. 50p. Friends Meeting House, Paradise Sq. **051-733 4497.**

LONDON, SE23. Rugby match to help Fund for paralysed Guy's student Stephen Duckworth. 11 p.m. Honor Oak Park, Brockley Rise. **01-387 4499.**

TUES 12 OCT

LONDON, SE6. Public meeting against Tebbit's Law. 7.30 p.m., Davenport Hall, Catford. Org. by Rushey Green Ward Labour Party.

LONDON, WC1. William Morris Society Annual Kelmscott Lecture. Asa Briggs on 'The London of William Morris'. *Gustav Tuck Lecture Theatre,* University College, Gower St, 6.30 p.m. £1.50 from 6 p.m. at door.

LONDON, WC2. Women in Publishing meeting, 7 p.m. Freemason's Arms, Long Acre. Heather Morris and Margaret Owens from NUJ, Sue Lloyd, editor new Roget's Thesaurus, and Sheila MacLeod, author. Contact Sue Butterworth **01-328 2262.**

WED 13 OCT

LONDON, W1. 'Nubia'. Egyptian lecture by R.D. Anderson. 6 p.m. Egyptian Education Bureau, 4 Chesterfield Gardens.

LONDON, NW1. 'How to make up your mind about the bomb'. Course of 6 Wed. evenings at Working Men's College, Crowndale Rd. **01-387 2037/8208.**

LONDON, EC1. 'Television Drama – Plays for Today?' 10-week course with video. 6.30 p.m. at City University. Details: Adult Education Centre **01-253 4399.**

ASHFORD. Public meeting with Peter Shore MP and Murray Rowland (prospective parliamentary candidate for Spelthorne). 7.45 p.m. Ashford College (Middx.), Church Rd. Org. by Spelthorne CLP.

THURS 14 OCT

LONDON, SW1. Until 21 Nov. Exhibition, 'Urban Kisses: 7 Artists from New York'. Concourse and Main Galleries, ICA, The Mall. Closed Mons. 12 noon-9 p.m. Also **Laurie Anderson:** Artworks in the Upper Gallery.

LONDON, WC2. (lecture, 'Beatrice Webb: The Other Self' by Elizabeth Longford. 6 p.m. Old Theatre, LSE, Houghton Street.

LONDON, SW1. 'In Conversation Series'. Margaret Atwood with Fay Weldon. 1 p.m. at ICA. Tickets £1.25 (bookable), day pass 40p. **Tel: 01-930 3647.**

LONDON, WC1. 'Our children, our future – progress or decay" – exhibition and pubic meeting. Org. by NUT. Chair: Anna Ford. Speakers: Neil Kinnock, John Rae, Joan Sallis, A. H. Halsey. *Exhibition 5.30 p.m., meeting 7 p.m.* Camden Centre, Bidborough St, London WC1.

LONDON EC1. 'The Angel in the House' 19th century versions of womanhood. Thurs. eves. Contact H. Klein, City University, Northampton Sq. **Tel: 01-253 4399.**

LONDON, EC1. Peasants and Farmworkers: a social history. Thurs. eves. Contact: H. Klein, City University, Northampton Sq. **Tel: 01-253 4399.**

LONDON, SW11. Wandsworth WEA: 'Nuclear Links: the connection between nuclear weapons and nuclear power'. 7.30 p.m., Garfield Community Centre, Garfield Rd. 65p (35p u/w). **Tel: 01-352 7691.**

FRI 15 OCT

KENDAL. Norman Hogg speaks. 7.30 p.m. Kirkland Hall, Kendal LP. **0539 24657.**

GREAT YARMOUTH. 'No More Nuclear Power?' ANC fringe meeting at SDP Conference. **0742 754691.**

LONDON, EC4. Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. An evening of food and entertainment in aid of appeal. 7 p.m.-midnight, at the Ludgate Cellars, Apothecary St. Tickets £5, from CPBF, 9 Poland St, London W1. **Tel: 01-437 2795.**

SAT 16 OCT

MANCHESTER. CHAR general meeting, 'Local Housing Policies for Single People: The CHAR Blueprint'. 11 a.m. UMIST. **01-839 6185.**

SWANSEA. Labour Party Day-school. New initiatives in Public Ownership and Workers' Control. Speakers: Bernard Dix (NUPE), Geoff Edge (West Mids. CCI, Stephen Bodington (IWC). AUEW House, Orchard St, Swansea. **0792 468934.**

FORTHCOMING

17 OCTOBER. ABERDEEN. Beatrix Campbell, 'Wanted: A New Deal For Women'. 7.30 p.m. Aberdeen Univ Union, Upper Kirkgate.

23 OCTOBER. LONDON, EC1. Conference, 'Restructuring END'. 10.30 a.m. City University, St John Street. Advance registration essential £3. END, 227 Seven Sisters Rd., N4. **01-272 1236.**

23 OCTOBER. OXFORD. Seminar, 'Co-operatives and Economic Planning'. 10 a.m. Co-op Hall, 196 Cowley Rd.

24 OCTOBER. LONDON, WC1. Forum, 'Is the Law and Order Debate Genuine?' Andy Erlain, 3 p.m. Library, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square.

29-31 OCTOBER, LONDON, E1. The Moving Left Show. Over 50 sessions on wide range of Left topics plus evening music, theatre, comedy. Queen Mary College, Mile End. Info & Free programme. Jo Newman, 16 St John Street, EC1. **01-251 4406.**

30 OCTOBER. WEMBLEY. International Conference on Active Birth. Details: Active Birth Movement, 32 Cholmeley Crescent, London N6 5JR. Tel: **01-348 4636.**

31 OCTOBER. LONDON, W1. Chile Solidarity Campaign presents Inti-Illimani and Paco Pena in concert. 7 p.m. Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Ct. Rd. Box Office. **01-580 9562.**

1 NOVEMBER. MIAMI, FLORIDA. Deadline for Papers and Registrations for 'Faculty (Staff) Development and Evaluation – 2nd International Seminar', 29/12/82-5/1/83. Details: Chris de Winter Hebron, Humanities Faculty, Newcastle Polytechnic. **0632 612181.**

2 NOVEMBER. LONDON, WC1. *Kirsten Sonstegard* on 'Psychodrama'. 7.30 p.m. Community Rooms, 26 Millman St.

4 NOVEMBER. MANCHESTER. Meeting, 'The Politics of the Peace Movement', *Man. Socialist* Soc. 8 p.m. Black Lion Hotel, Blackfriars St., Salford. **061-224 5378/4339.**

5 NOVEMBER. LEICESTER. Poetry Reading inc. *Michele Roberts.* 7.30 p.m. Blackthorn Books, High St.

5-6 NOVEMBER, LONDON WC1. Fifth Socialist Book Fair. Complete display of socialist, radical and trade union literature. (Details of stands, etc. Tel: Bookmarks 01-802 6145.) Camden Town Hall, Euston Road.

5-9 NOVEMBER, SHEFFIELD. History Workshop 16. Subjects inc. Sexual Politics, the State, Peace Movements, People's History. Speakers – Raphael Samuel, Sheila Rowbotham, Royden Harrison, Anna Davin. Sheffield City Poly, *Pond St. site.* **0742 615388.**

6 NOVEMBER, LONDON SW1. 'Stop Sizewell B' Rally and conference. Speakers – David Ennals MP, Arthur Scargill, Ken Cameron, Colin Sweet, Dr Don Arnott. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Central Hall, Westminster. **0742-754691.**

6 NOVEMBER. MANCHESTER 20. The Peace Movement in 1982–Alternative Production. 10 a.m. £2 (50p u/w). Withington Adult Educ. Centre, Mauldeth Rd. **061-861 9205.**

29 NOVEMBER. LONDON, EC2. MIND Conference on the Mental Health (Amendment) Act, 1982. Spkrs. inc. Prof R. Bluglass, Prof R. Olsen, Prof J. Gunn, Bernard Kat, Seamus Killen, Larry Gostin. Barbican Centre. Registration £30 by 8 Nov. to Conference Secretary, MIND, 22 Harley St., London, W1. **01-637 0741.**

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